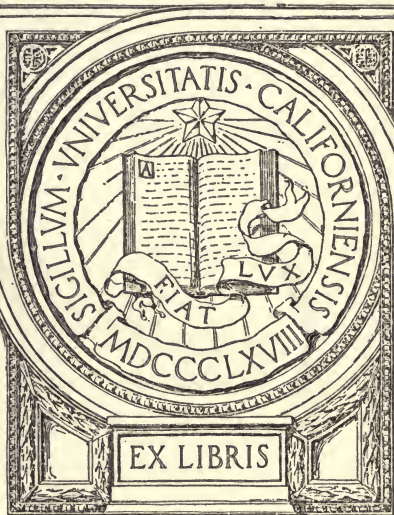


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The Last Chapter

The Venerable Bede spent the last day of his life dictating his translation of the last chapter of St. John's Gospel. In the evening the scribe said, "Dear Master, there is yet one sentence to write." He answered, "Write quickly." Presently the youth said, "Now it is finished." He replied, "It is well. Thou hast said the truth, it is finished." Soon thereafter he breathed his last.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

IN the curriculum of high schools or colleges there is no subject that can be made more interesting than literature. It tells of the men and women who wrote the best books throughout the ages, and it tells about the books themselves. In English Literature, for example, our survey covers a period of more than a thousand years. We start with the fine old battle-epics of a period when civilization was just emerging from the Dark Ages. Step by step we are carried through the era of chivalry and romance, the refreshing literary outburst in the age of Chaucer, the scholarly period of the Reformation, the golden days of Good Queen Bess, the more sedate period of Puritanism, then the long epoch of classical traditions under the three successive literary leaders, Dryden, Pope, and Johnson, and finally the still longer period of romantic influences best represented in the writings of Wordsworth and Tennyson. Such authors as Mr. Kipling, Mr. Masfield, and others who are producing literary work to-day are merely contributing to that great national utterance which had its beginnings in the Anglo-Saxon sagas and is likely to continue as long as mankind has ideas that will be treasured by succeeding generations.

A book on English Literature should therefore be a guide to an ideal land of never-failing delight — the land of the imagination, where we may wander at pleasure with the greatest minds of all times and share their thoughts and feelings. The author of this book has spent twenty years in teaching this attractive subject to high school pupils.

He has tried to provide for students the sort of book they will like. There are no "topics for discussion" or "questions for review" bobbing up at the end of each chapter. A student can go right on reading from chapter to chapter without skipping a lot of pages of fine print. Of course, there is a list of good books and suggested readings to help the student who wishes to pursue the subject more fully, but that list has been placed at the end of the volume, where, like the index, it is pretty well out of the way and merely for the convenience of those who want to use it. A great many dates have been included in this book, but it will not be necessary to learn most of them. Dates of authors' lives and their writings are useful only to establish the relative position of the writers and their books to the period in which they worked.

The numerous pictures in the book have been chosen with unusual care. The student who would derive the greatest benefit from his course in literature should study carefully the portraits of the authors as well as the views of their homes and the surroundings amid which their writings were produced. There is also a map on which have been indicated the leading places of literary interest.

The study of literature is often the starting-point for some of the most delightful interests that men and women develop after their school days. It involves acquaintance with nature, art, history, biography, and various kindred subjects. Students should get the habit of reading more than the teacher requires and should choose most of the extra reading from the kind of literature that will be most helpful. Such a habit, developed during school years, may become a source of unending pleasure in after life.

In writing this book the author has drawn freely upon the material accumulated by the many writers on literary topics. It would be impossible to make full acknowledgment in detail, but special thanks are due to those through

whose courtesy several copyrighted pictures are included in these pages. John Lane Company kindly permitted the reproduction of Aubrey Beardsley's drawing, "The Toilet," to illustrate Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. The author wishes to express his obligations to several of his colleagues, notably to Professor William F. Gray, who made valuable suggestions for illustrating the book, and to Dr. Frederic A. Child, who read the entire text in proof.

J. L. H.

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA
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ENGLISH LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS LITERATURE?

THERE are some things in this world that are more easily understood than explained. One of these is literature, which apparently has to do with books, yet we know that almanacs, catalogs, dictionaries, and many other kinds of books are not literature. Men may laboriously compile a great work of research, like a census report or an encyclopedia, extending through many portly volumes, and yet not write a single line of literature in the entire undertaking. On the other hand, an inspired writer may arrange a few words in a particular order, produce what the world accepts as a great poem, and win immortality for the literature that he has wrought. Sometimes it is easy to decide whether a particular work is literature or not. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Gray's *Elegy* are literature; a city directory and the Congressional Record are not. At times, however, the decision is more difficult. A personal diary may be a dull narrative of uninteresting daily routine, or it may be a vivacious record of a human life that continues to interest succeeding generations of readers. Whenever a book or a document of any sort gives evidence of artistic revelation — of anything more than a bare statement of fact — we begin to detect the literary quality. That quality may be only sufficient to arouse a brief temporary interest, or it may be enough to assure the writer's fame for all time.

Civilized life would be intolerable for many of us if it meant merely the mechanical performance of a routine duty to earn a living. Man does not live by bread only, but by a manna that feeds his emotional and spiritual self. We have been endowed with faculties and impulses that should not be ignored. Our joy in the beauty of nature is heightened when we learn that some one else has felt more deeply or perceived more clearly and when we may make that other's emotion our own. The delight that attends the coming of spring with its birds and its blossoms is quite as general as the regret over the waning of the year with the prospect of cold and suffering to come. Human society fosters not only our appreciation for nature, but friendship, love, patriotism, and similar emotions. All these have found expression from the earliest time in the form of literature that we call lyrical poetry.

Man is endowed with a memory as well as with emotions. He delights in recalling pleasant experiences whether in his own career or in other lives. He has likewise the gift of imagination — the ability to form a mental picture suggested by a description or a narration. In thus re-creating events in other lives, real or fictitious, he shares for a time the joys and the sorrows of others, he admires the heroic qualities of the good and despises the base qualities of the bad. He exercises his judgment in following their adventures, deciding whether they are doing wisely or foolishly. While he is doing all these things he is learning much that will be of value in shaping his own character. He will instinctively seek to develop what is good and to curb that which is bad.

Literature takes account of many things from the crude and elemental passions of barbarous life to the complex and refined sentiments of civilization. It is in a sense the enduring expression of the best thought of all ages. We take pleasure in remembering such thought and in feeling that it

is part of ourselves. When we study literature we must therefore not place too much importance upon the mere detailed facts of an author's life. It is far more vital for us to know the author's work, to judge it in the light of his career, and to accept it as part of that great message that literature proclaims from one age to another. Literature takes rank with music, painting, and the other fine arts in affording us abiding pleasure and in stimulating the imagination, but even more than the other arts it is influential in shaping human character and in presenting noble ideals of conduct. No one who has developed a love for books need feel lonely in that realm where he is free to wander at will and to take the best that the great minds of the past have to offer.

CHAPTER I

THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

1. Prehistoric Britain. We think of England to-day as the home of the great Anglo-Saxon race, which has spread to the four quarters of the earth and has made its influence felt in every civilized country, but we must not forget that the island of Britain had a history long before the Angles and Saxons came to its shores.



The Coast of Britain

There is scanty record of its earliest inhabitants, the men of the stone age who dwelt in caves and made a bitter struggle for existence under the most unfavorable conditions. That race was followed by a tribe of Celts, who were of Aryan extraction and represented a more advanced civilization.

These Celts were part of a larger group that dwelt in Gaul and in parts of Spain. They were probably the inhabitants of Britain about 330 B.C. when the Greek navigator Pytheas arrived on a trade mission. The earliest known name of the island was Albion, which may perhaps be explained as "the white land" because of the gleaming chalk cliffs that are found along the coast, although the origin of the name is really uncertain. Legends have come down concerning the strange religion of those early days — the worship of the

heavenly bodies under the authority of a group of priests called Druids; the wild incantations and prophecies of the ancient poets known as bards; the building of huge open-air temples such as Stonehenge, which still stands on Salisbury Plain as a monument to a vanished race. The primitive Celts in Britain were a superstitious, imaginative people, living in small villages or hamlets, and obtaining their subsistence as farmers or herders. They believed in fairies, elves, and similar airy creatures; they practiced weird rites to avoid the evils of witchcraft and spells. Certain places,



Roman Remains in Britain

such as groves or dells, and certain trees, such as the oak, were regarded as sacred; the mistletoe and various other plants were supposed to possess mystic healing power.

2. The Roman Occupation. In 55 and 54 B.C., Julius Caesar, then governor of Gaul, made two expeditions against Britain. It was not until nearly a century later, however, that the Romans began a systematic conquest which soon added the island to the Roman Empire as an organized province. For more than three centuries Britain shared the varying fortunes of the Caesars. Those liberty-loving Celts who refused to bow to the Roman yoke fled to the mountain fastnesses of Scotland and of Wales, where they and their descendants kept up irregular warfare against

the imperial power; but the majority of the Celts submitted to Roman authority and enjoyed the splendid though superficial civilization. Wherever the Roman of those days set up the imperial standards he sought to reproduce in miniature the luxurious life of Rome itself. Hence Britain soon had well-built roads radiating from the more important towns, in which were richly appointed villas with marble baths, mosaic pavements, and other details that appealed to the Roman fancy. Temples, theaters, and forums were erected, and in many parts of England the remains of such buildings are still to be found. When Rome was converted to Christianity the new religion spread to the provinces, but little is known of its progress in Britain. In fact, the glittering civilization of the Roman period proved to be a mere shell that did not last very long after the waning fortunes of the Empire demanded the recall of the Roman legionaries between 407-410 A.D.

3. The Anglo-Saxon Conquest. The peaceful Celts, who had been living for generations under the protection of Roman authority, were no match for their more warlike cousins who came on marauding expeditions from Wales and Scotland soon after the Romans withdrew. Moreover, another danger threatened the unfortunate inhabitants of the province — a danger that came from beyond the North Sea. Piratical bands from various Teutonic tribes dwelling in what is now north western Germany began to swoop down upon the eastern coast of Britain and to carry off rich plunder to their rude homes across the sea. The domesticated Celts were almost helpless between these powerful enemies, and in their extremity they decided to make a compact with one against the other. They invited certain Teutonic tribes called Saxons to wage war against the Scotch and Welsh invaders, promising their allies fertile farm lands in Kent for that service. According to tradition the first of the Saxon chiefs landed on the coast

of Kent in 449. Apparently they kept their agreement at first and drove back the venturesome Celts to the highlands; but after a while, recognizing the utter helplessness of the civilized Britons, the Saxon tribes invited their kin to come over in ever increasing numbers until, within another century, they had succeeded in bringing the southern part of Britain completely within their power. This significant historical event, known as the Anglo-Saxon Conquest, established the ancestors of the present inhabitants of England on the island. There were three Teutonic tribes concerned in the Conquest — the Angles, who set up kingdoms in Mercia, Northumberland, and East Anglia; the Saxons, who settled in Essex, Sussex, and Wessex; and the Jutes, who made their home in Kent. The last were the least important and played only a small part in the later history of the period, but the Angles and Saxons afterwards fought for supremacy among themselves. They waged their wars with varying fortunes until in 828 a king of Wessex named Egbert established himself as ruler of all England — a name derived from Engla-land, the Land of the Angles.

It was during the brave but hopeless struggles which the Britons waged against their unfaithful allies that innumerable legends arose concerning the heroic exploits of a semi-mythical British ruler, King Arthur, who founded the Order of the Round Table. In the entire course of English history there was no event that made so rich a contribution to our literature as the adventures of this shadowy ruler. He was regarded as a pattern of gentility and courtesy in an age that was in many respects crude and brutal. The example that he set to his Knights of the Table Round is the more striking when we remember the barbarous conditions of the period in which he ruled.

4. Home Life of the Anglo-Saxons. The new tribes who made themselves masters of Britain had been warriors

and seamen for generations in their old Germanic homeland. They destroyed much of the civilization that Rome had introduced and substituted for it their own less enlightened but more vigorous life which they had known beyond the North Sea. Dwelling in a cold, comparatively barren country, they had developed into a hardy, war-loving race. Even their earliest literature reflected the love of battle and the love of the sea. As a race they prized highly the great boon of liberty and cherished the ideal of self-government. For them existence was a stern business, very different from the life that such nations as the Greeks and the Romans knew on the more hospitable shores of the Mediterranean. In the northern latitudes summer was a brief season and gave but a short relief from the terrible struggle against the bitterness of ice, snow, and sleet. Only the most rugged natures could be hardened against the exposure that life in such a country involved. In the poetry that they brought with them to their new home in Britain is reflected much of the suffering they had to endure in the Germanic north-country. When they reached the milder shores of England and noted the fertility of the soil, they too, like the despised Briton, became tillers of the land and yielded to a manner of life less rigorous than that of piratical marauders. Farming and grazing soon proved so profitable that within a few generations they lost much of their desire to prey upon others. Thereafter they devoted themselves to those arts and traditions that are associated with a civilized existence.

5. The Teutonic Religion. The Angles and the Saxons brought with them from the Continent the worship of heathen Teutonic deities such as Woden, the All-father, the source of wisdom; Thor, the god of thunder, with his mighty hammer, the slayer of trolls and of evil spirits; Loki, the evil one, the god of destruction; and Baldur, the beautiful, the god of the sun. The abode of the gods was in Valhalla, the hall of the slain, where the warriors who perished bravely

on earth were invited to dwell and feast as Woden's guests. There, in the hall of joy with its roof of gold, the time passed wondrously in eating and drinking. The exalted heroes recounted their gallant deeds on earth while the gods nodded approval; but only those noble spirits were present who had been summoned by the Valkyrs, the nine handmaidens who served as choosers of the slain and as attendants at the banquet. According to the stern belief of those heathen times, even the gods were subject to the decrees of a higher power called Wyrd, or Fate, which determined all things — even the time when the gods themselves must pass into a perpetual twilight. This fatalism, or belief in the helplessness of the individual in the hands of destiny, served to retard the development of the races that came under its influence. The religion of Woden and Thor is gone, but the memory of those pagan gods is preserved in the names of Wednesday (Wodensday) and Thursday.



Valkyr Carrying a Hero to Valhalla

6. The Language of the Anglo-Saxons. The invaders of Britain represented distinct tribes in their Teutonic homeland and brought with them various dialects of Ger-

manic origin. These dialects did not develop into a uniform language during the Anglo-Saxon period. In some parts of England, indeed, local peculiarities have persisted in the speech even to our own time. There were many varieties of English between the Northumbrian of the northern districts and the West-Saxon of the extreme south and west. Several centuries elapsed before a language that was in any sense national emerged from the midst of contending dialects. None of the dialects resembled modern English to any considerable degree. The language employed inflections, or varying forms for the different cases of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. Its words were, for the most part, very different from the words that we now use. Moreover, the words were differently arranged in the sentence and occasionally included letters that are quite unknown to modern English, such as þ and ð, which are two forms of *th*. The following specimen will give an idea of our language in its earliest form:

Aelfred cyning fōr mid þrim scipum ūt on sǣ and gefeaht wiþ fēower sciphlaestas Deniscra manna, and þāra scipa twā genam, and þā menn ofslaegene wǣron þe þǣron wǣron.

Expressed in modern English this would read:

King Alfred went out to sea with three ships and fought with four ship-loads of Danish men, and captured two of the ships and the men who were thereon were slain.

If we bear in mind that þ is a form of *th*, it is not difficult to determine the meaning of each word in this old English sentence. This is, however, a very easy specimen to translate; other passages would be far less intelligible to the modern reader.

7. Versification. The earliest literature of the Anglo-Saxons was in poetic form. In choosing that form they followed the example of the Greeks and the Romans, who likewise found poetry the best medium for the expression of

their emotion. Poetry is easy to remember and adapts itself readily to declamation or singing. Much of the martial literature of Old England was thus handed on from one generation to another by word of mouth. Anglo-Saxon poetry was quite unlike the verse of a later period. There was no regular succession of accented and unaccented syllables, and there was likewise no rhyme. Each line was divided into two parts by a pause at the middle, and each part contained two accented syllables, besides a varying number of unaccented syllables. The rhythm of the verse was therefore not regular as it is in most modern poetry, but was distinctly irregular, creating an effect that is usually less pleasing to our ears, though not without a certain metrical quality of its own.

Another striking feature of Anglo-Saxon verse was Alliteration, which means the repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of two or more words in the same line. This repetition usually fell upon important syllables, as in

<i>flōd</i> under <i>foldan</i>	<i>nis</i> þæt <i>feor</i> <i>heonon</i>
flood under earth	not is that far hence

or in such a rhythmic line as

<i>nīpende</i> <i>niht</i>	and <i>norðan</i> wind
darkening night	and northern wind

It is also possible to have vowel alliteration, in which case any vowel served to alliterate with any other. Thus we find

<i>enge</i> <i>ānpaðas</i>	<i>uncūð</i> <i>gelād</i>
narrow one-path	unknown way

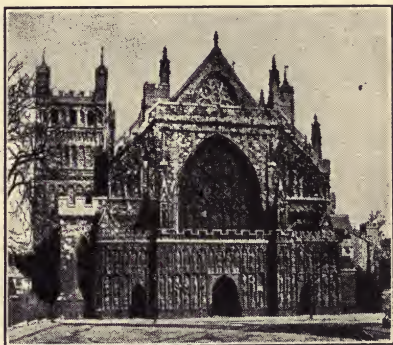
While alliteration is no longer an essential characteristic of English verse, many later poets have employed it to enhance the musical effect of their work. Contrast the rugged character of the Anglo-Saxon verse with these melodious lines by Swinburne:

All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits and sorrows are cast
Far out with the foam of the present that sweeps to the surf of the
past;
Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and between the remote sea-
gates,
Waste water washes and tall ships foundered and deep death waits.

8. **The Scop and the Gleeman.** It is perhaps somewhat difficult for us to catch the charm of the crude verse that the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed, but we can understand how the free construction of their poetry made it possible for the singer to compose new verses in the midst of his song. They distinguished between the *scop*, or maker of verses, who was usually attached to the court of some king or powerful noble, and the *gleeman*, or wandering singer, who went about from hall to hall, not so much an original maker of song as a singer of verses composed by the *scop*. Whenever the successful warriors returned to their mead-hall, flushed with the triumph of a hard-won battle or laden with the spoils of a profitable marauding expedition, their festivity was not complete unless there was at hand the talented scop who strummed the few strings of his small harp and chanted the rough alliterative verses celebrating the deeds of the heroes, or perhaps recalling similar exploits of their ancestors. At these turbulent feasts, when the warriors gorged themselves with roasted flesh and drank deep from their horns of strong ale or mead, the scop found a willing audience to enjoy the impassioned recital of brave deeds by land and sea, of man's bitter struggle with the elements, of the strange workings of Wyrd, or Fate, and of the supreme mystery of death.

9. **Old English Manuscripts.** Comparatively little of the earliest English literature has come down to us. Much of it was destroyed through the ravages of time, but particularly heavy was the loss incurred during the reign of Henry VIII, when the monasteries and other religious houses

throughout England were pillaged and their property either confiscated or given to the flames. Of course, a great deal of the Old English poetry was never committed to parchment, but perished with the singers themselves. Our greatest literary heritage of that period is the unique manuscript of *Beowulf*, which is among the treasures of the British Museum to-day. At Oxford University is preserved the Junius Manuscript of the works attributed to Caedmon. In Exeter Cathedral there is a remarkable collection of shorter pieces in a volume known as the Exeter Book, which was presented to the Cathedral Library by Archbishop Leofric about 1050. Equally interesting is the Vercelli Book, which was discovered in 1822 in the remote town of Vercelli, in northern Italy, where it had probably been



Exeter Cathedral

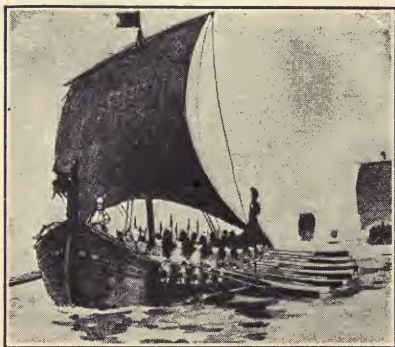
left centuries ago by some English prelate on his way to Rome. These four manuscripts contain most of the important literary documents that have survived from the earliest period. In studying the literature of the Anglo-Saxons we should distinguish between the pagan poetry that was composed before their conversion, and the Christian poetry which was the work of a later group of writers.

10. The Earliest Literature. The oldest known poem in the language, the *Widsið*, or *Far Traveler*, was probably composed on the Continent before the Anglo-Saxons undertook the conquest of Britain. The poem is a fragment of 143 lines preserved in the Exeter Book. *Widsið* is the name of a gleeman who unlocks his "word-hoard" and tells how

he fared forth over Europe and Asia, singing in many a mead-hall and receiving gold rings and similar gifts from kings whom he entertained with his songs. After the recital of his remarkable wanderings he concludes that those kings rule best who are proud to be praised by the wandering gleeman, and who are generous givers to those who sing their praises till life and light have fled together.

Another poem that is also preserved in the Exeter Book, but belongs to a much later period than *Widsið*, is *Deor's*

Lament. It relates the distress of an unhappy scop who has been supplanted by another singer and bewails the passing of his lord's favor to a successful rival. Not only has he lost favor, but he has also become an exile, deprived of his land-right and nourishing a consuming jealousy in



A Viking Vessel

his heart. He finds consolation, however, in the thought that other and greater men had likewise to endure their share of woe in the changing fortunes of a fickle world. If they got over their troubles, so could he. Like *Widsið*, this shorter poem of 42 lines probably relates the experiences of a real minstrel, but unlike the happy story of *Widsið*, it is a cry of sorrow from a heart that knew the sting of ingratitude. Yet it shows also the singer's spirit of courage in adversity — a determination not to be crushed by the weight of misfortune.

Several other fine poems of much later date in the Exeter Book deserve attention. *The Wanderer* relates the sorrow of a man who has lost his lord. Friendless and forlorn, he

roams from place to place, nursing his deep grief in his bosom. Sometimes in his dreams he beholds his dead lord and lives again the joys of the past. When he awakes he beholds the cold gray waves of the ocean about the ship; his heart is heavier because of the scurrying snow and the sharp hail. A somewhat similar episode is found in *The Seafarer*, where the miseries of traveling on the sea in winter are vividly described. Little does he who dwells on land know of the hardships of the icy sea, yet, in spite of all, the seafarer does not envy the landsman. The lure of the deep is too strong; for him the life on land would be a living death. Both of these poems reflect a love of the sea that has characterized Englishmen at all periods of their history.

11. Beowulf. The greatest of all the Old English poems is beyond all question *Beowulf*, a spirited epic of 3183 lines. The poem appears to be a welding together of pagan lays that belong to a period as early as the sixth or seventh centuries, though the existing version is written in a West Saxon dialect of the eleventh century and reveals the influence of Christian scribes who made additions to the older heathen portions of the poem. It celebrates the glorious adventures of the hero Beowulf, first as a young man in his combats with Grendel and with Grendel's mother; then, in a second part, fifty years later, as an aged king, fighting his last fight against a fire drake that had been ravaging the land. It is possible that part of this poem was written before the Anglo-Saxons came to England. The scene of action is in Denmark and along the southern coast of Sweden.

12. The Story of Beowulf. Hrothgar, King of the West Danes, built for himself, not far from the sea, a great mead-hall which he named Heorot, where he expected to feast with his followers and enjoy the songs of his favorite scop. For a while he lived there in happiness, until one night there came a hideous monster named Grendel, a prowler from the wild marsh land, who slew thirty of the

sleeping thanes and carried off their bodies to his foul lair in the fens. Not only on the next night did the same thing happen again, but whenever thereafter the monster heard the sounds of festivity in the hall. No one seemed able to cope with this terrible foe, since his body was proof against sword-thrust. Heorot stood as a place accursed and for twelve long winters the West Danes suffered great grief.

Finally the story of Grendel's misdeeds reached the ears of a young hero named Beowulf who dwelt across the sea at the court of his uncle King Hygelac, in southern Sweden. He determined to go to King Hrothgar's aid. Accompanied by a group of brave warriors he embarked in a "foamy-necked floater, most like to a bird" and made his way across the deep. Beowulf and his gallant companions, attired in their shining armor, were ushered into the presence of Hrothgar, and after the exchange of greetings Beowulf asked permission to encounter the monster in Heorot that night. Hrothgar agreed and in the evening the party assembled to quaff mead and listen to the inspiring song of the gleemen. After Wealtheow, the Queen of Hrothgar, had distributed gifts to the thanes, the royal pair withdrew with their attendants while Beowulf and his followers lay down to rest, awaiting the coming of Grendel.

Soon the monster came striding over the moors, bent upon the destruction of those who had remained in Heorot. He made his way into the hall in wrathful mood, fire blazing from his eyes. He seized one of the sleeping warriors, crunched the victim with his powerful jaws and devoured him on the spot. Then he reached for Beowulf, but the alert hero grappled with Grendel. The monster found himself in such a handgrip as he had never known before. Back and forth they struggled, each striving to gain advantage. Soon Grendel had enough of the fray, but Beowulf would not release his firm grasp. The mead-hall thundered with the noise of combat, tables and benches were over-

turned. Suddenly there arose a terrible cry as of one in extreme agony. Beowulf's earls drew their swords to aid their leader, not knowing, perhaps, that the choicest of blades could not pierce the loathsome fiend. The terrible wail came from the throat of the monster, now conscious of defeat. A deep wound appeared in his shoulder, the sinews snapped — in a moment the arm, tightly clutched by Beowulf, gave way and the sorely wounded Grendel rushed away to his noisome fen, knowing full well that his days were numbered.

In the morning there was joy among Hrothgar's people when they learned of Beowulf's exploit and marveled at the huge arm and shoulder that Grendel had left behind. Warriors came from far and near to behold the wonder. Several followed the trail of blood that the dying foe had left behind him and came at last to the water's side, boiling with gore, where Grendel had leaped in to reach his hidden cave. All took part in the great rejoicing and gave thanks to the Almighty. Quickly they repaired the harm done in Heorot and the great mead-hall became once more the scene of festivity. Rich gifts were bestowed upon Beowulf for his valor, and after the feasting he went to the palace with Hrothgar, while his men with the others went to their rest in Heorot.

13. The Coming of Grendel's Mother. During the night there came another wretched creature who dwelt in the dismal icy waters — Grendel's mother, now eager with desire to wreak vengeance for her dead son. Before the sleeping warriors could bestir themselves she had seized and carried off one of them, Aeschere, the counselor and dearest friend of Hrothgar. Loud was the lamentation of the King when he heard of his loss. He described to Beowulf the gloomy headlands that had been the haunt of the monsters — a dismal spot where dank woods overhang the surface of the perilous fen and where at night ghastly flashes of light pass over the troubled waters. No one knew

the depth of the flood. So accursed was the place that even the hunted stag, closely pursued by the hounds, would die upon the brink rather than seek safety in the water. Beowulf was in no wise appalled by the terrors of the undertaking. Accompanied by his trusty men, he set out over the stony gorges and waste regions till they reached the horrid pool, where on the shore they found the head of the unfortunate Aeschere, while in the blood-stained waters strange sea-monsters and serpents were swimming about. Reckless of danger, Beowulf girt on his armor and plunged into the flood. For a day's space, as it seemed, he sank until he reached a roofed hall where there was no water. Therein he saw the monster whom he sought. She grasped him with her claws, but could not break through his coat of mail. Soon they were engaged in fierce struggle, and Beowulf found even his fine-tempered sword useless against the foe. She likewise was balked in her effort to pierce his braided breast-net. For a time the issue was doubtful, but Beowulf saw in the cave a huge sword wrought by the giants of old — a weapon beyond the strength of man to wield. This he grasped and struck her furiously on the neck, so that she fell dead upon the floor. Looking about the loathsome dwelling he saw in a dim corner the lifeless body of Grendel. When Beowulf with his huge sword cut off the head of the monster, the blade melted as ice in the venomous blood and only the hilt was left in his hand. Beowulf took none of the wondrous treasures that he saw, but returned to the surface of the waters, carrying only the head of Grendel and the sword-hilt. Long and joyous was the feasting when the West Danes learned of Beowulf's exploits and knew that at last they could dwell in Heorot free from care. Beowulf presented the sword-hilt to Hrothgar, who in turn loaded Beowulf's ship with weapons, steeds, and gold. Thus rewarded, he sailed back to his homeland, where he ruled wisely over his people for the space of fifty years.

14. The Fight with the Dragon. The third and most difficult of Beowulf's adventures came in his old age when he encountered a fire drake or dragon that had been guarding a treasure-hoard for three hundred years and had begun to ravage the land because part of the treasure had been stolen by a slave. Beowulf knew the danger of this fight and had fashioned for himself a shield of iron, because a shield of wood was no protection against the fire-breathing foe. In spite of his years he went bravely forth to face the dragon amidst the crags where the monster lurked. Terror-stricken his comrades nearby saw him and the dragon enveloped in deadly fire. Their fear was such that they fled to the forest for safety. Again and again the dragon rushed at Beowulf. The aged warrior struck at the monster's head; the sword snapped asunder at the sharp stroke. A brave comrade named Wiglaf rushed to his aid and together they finally did the dragon to death, but not before Beowulf had breathed the fatal flames that betokened the end of his own career. As the hero lay dying, Wiglaf brought forth the treasures from the dragon's cave, and Beowulf beheld in sorrow the gold that he had won for his people. He knew that his end was near and met his fate as one who had lived bravely. He asked the warriors to build a barrow after the burning of his body to be as a remembrance to his people and that it might be seen afar off across the mist of the waters by seafaring men. Then, after giving his gold collar and his armor to a young thane, he said that all his kinsmen had been swept away, that earls in their strength had gone to their Maker, and that he must follow. Those were his last words. The cowardly warriors who had taken refuge in the wood now came out and were rebuked by Wiglaf. In accordance with Beowulf's commands, the dragon was cast into the sea, and the dead hero's body was burned on an imposing pyre. A monumental barrow was built over his ashes, and in the barrow was placed the dragon's treasure.

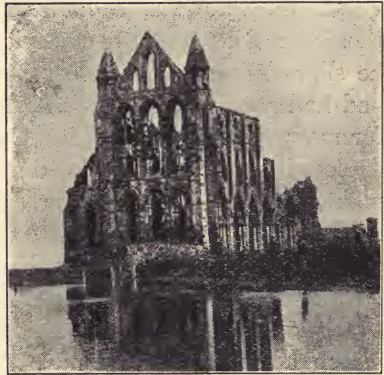
The poem ends with the lamentation of the mourners and a recital of the noble qualities of the departed hero.

15. The Significance of Beowulf. Many attempts have been made to interpret this fine old epic as more than a story of heroic adventure. One theory would make the hero Beowulf a sort of sun-god, representing the genial life-giving quality of the orb of day, while Grendel typifies the cold night, the mist, the malarial pestilence from the swamps which the power of the sun overcomes. Another would make of Beowulf the impersonation of determined mankind fighting for existence against the encroachment of the sea and against the other unfavorable forces of nature. Still another explains that Grendel is a bear — a “grinder of bones” — representing the forces of brute creation that must be overcome if man is to be supreme. Whatever fanciful meanings the critics may read into *Beowulf*, the fact remains that it is the finest poem of our early literature, with stirring pictures of life in the days of the primitive Saxon warriors and sea-rovers.

16. Other Pagan Poems. Apart from *Beowulf* there is very little epic poetry that has come down to us from the earlier period. There is a fine fragment of fifty lines called *Finnsburh*, describing a brave defense of Finn's fortress against a strong attacking party. We have also two shorter fragments of a poem known as *Waldhere*, which relate the heroic exploits of Waltharius, who when a child was given as a hostage to Attila, King of the Huns, and who grew up to be a great general. The story was very popular in other countries and may still be read in a Latin version. These pagan fragments in Old English give us a hint of the variety that prevailed in the epic poetry of those early days, but *Beowulf* remains the one supreme example of Anglo-Saxon heroic verse at its best.

17. Conversion to Christianity. While Christianity had first exerted its influence in Britain during the Roman

period and particularly through the efforts of Irish missionaries, the conquest by the Anglo-Saxons introduced the pagan worship of Woden and Thor, which became general during the century following their arrival. In 597 St. Augustine was sent from Rome by Pope Gregory I and within a year won ten thousand converts to the Christian religion. Christianity spread rapidly, although some of the Saxon leaders hesitated to accept it, naïvely explaining that it might offend the older heathen gods. Augustine was consecrated Archbishop and founded the cathedral church at Canterbury, where he died in 604. Others carried the faith to Northumbria, where zealous men and women established a number of religious orders for those who wished to live a life of piety and contemplation. In 657 the Abbess Hild, a woman of royal blood, founded her community



Whitby Abbey

in a majestic abbey on a cliff overlooking the North Sea at Whitby in Yorkshire. Still further north, at Jarrow on the Tyne, was established the monastery associated with the memory of Bede (673–735). This gentle scholar, often spoken of as the “Venerable Bede,” wrote a great many works in Latin, including an important *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. His only work in English was a translation of the Gospel of St. John, but unfortunately that version has been lost. The aged scholar was at work on it just before his death, but he became too weak to write and had to dictate to a young scribe. On the last day of

his life he worked on the final chapter. In the evening the scribe said, "There is yet one sentence to write." He answered, "Write quickly." Presently the youth said, "Now it is finished." He replied, "Thou hast said the truth, it is finished." Soon thereafter he breathed his last.

18. Caedmon. In Bede's history we find the story of Caedmon, the first Christian poet of England. The scene of the interesting episode was in the religious community at Whitby. The inmates were wont to gather in the evening and take turns in singing to the music of the harp. Caedmon, who was a humble cowherd, always enjoyed those occasions, but whenever it came near his turn to sing he slipped quietly away, because he was an ignorant man and had not mastered the art of the scop. This continued for many years during which Caedmon, as he waxed older, deplored the fact that he could not sing as the rest did. One night, after he had crept away from the cheerful circle, he fell asleep in the stable, where he had charge of the cattle, and in his sleep he beheld a shining apparition of the Lord. The figure addressed him saying, "Caedmon, sing to me!" Caedmon replied: "I know not how to sing; it was for that reason I left the feast to-night." But the voice continued, "None the less you shall sing to me." "What shall I sing?" asked Caedmon. "Sing the beginning of created things," was the answer. In his dream Caedmon then framed a song dealing with the story of Creation, and when he awoke next morning he related his strange experience to his companions. The story was carried to the Abbess Hild, who asked him to repeat the song he had made in his dream. Thereupon, when they heard it, all agreed that Caedmon had been divinely inspired. He became a monk and proceeded to paraphrase other parts of the Bible story into Saxon verse. Because of his mysterious inspiration he was never able to compose idle or frivolous verses, but only those that it became his pious tongue to sing.

A large number of religious poems contained in a manuscript now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University were formerly attributed to Caedmon. The most important of these are known as *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel*. These were probably the work of different poets who were inspired by the example of Caedmon. Another poem of the Caedmonian school, though of a later period, is the spirited fragment of *Judith*, which tells of the drunken revels of Holofernes and his followers, the slaying of the Assyrian prince, and the rout of his followers. About the only existing poem that may be accepted as the genuine work of Caedmon is a short hymn of nine lines in praise of the Creator.

19. Cynewulf. The first important name in English poetry is that of Cynewulf, yet we know little more about the poet than his name. There has been much discussion as to the identity of this early singer. The most favored view is that he was a Northumbrian or Mercian scholar who lived during the latter part of the eighth century. He seems to have known the favor of princes in his time and to have reached a ripe age that became somewhat burdensome to him. He inserted his signature in runes, or early Germanic letters, in the four important poems that are accepted as his work. These poems are *Crist*, *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene*.

Crist is the first poem that occurs in the Exeter Book, but we lack the opening of the poem because the first eight pages of the precious book have been lost. As the title suggests, it deals with the life of Christ and is divided into three parts. There is some question as to whether Cynewulf wrote the first and third parts. *Crist* reveals the strong influence of Latin Christianity on England and indicates that the author was a man gifted with an original mind.

Juliana is also found in the Exeter Book, coming immediately after *Crist*. It tells the story of Saint Juliana,

a virgin martyr who lived in the days of the Roman emperor Maximian. After enduring various temptations, including an offer of marriage from a pagan, and routing the devil in person, she suffers martyrdom. It is a less meritorious



Durham Cathedral

poem than *Crist*, and the same is true of *The Fates of the Apostles*, which is preserved in the Vercelli Book.

The fourth poem, *Elene*, is regarded as Cynewulf's masterpiece. It narrates the discovery of the true cross by Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine. The story is associated

with the more famous legend of Constantine's vision of the cross bearing the inscription *in hoc signo vinces*. The poem is written in simple but vivid style and contains beautiful descriptive passages. It is one of the finest poems in the Vercelli Book.

20. Other Poems. In addition to these compositions that are generally accepted as the work of Cynewulf, certain other poems have been attributed to him. Among these are: *The Dream of the Rood*, *Andreas*, and *Phoenix*. *The Dream of the Rood* (meaning the true cross) has much in common with *Elene*, and is also in the Vercelli Book. Some critics regard it as the most imaginative of all the Old English poems. It is, indeed, the only specimen of dream-poem before the Norman Conquest. The poet in a vision beholds the sacred cross bright with dazzling gems. As he watches it the rood changes; the jewels have been transformed to blood. As he continues to gaze in wonder the rood speaks;

it tells the story of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The poem ends with the singer's meditation over the miracle he has witnessed.

Andreas relates the mission of Saint Andrew, who is commanded by Heaven to go to the aid of Saint Matthew, then a prisoner in the hands of the Mermedonians. He is himself captured and tortured, but works a miracle whereby he not only secures his freedom, but also converts a savage tribe. This poem is noteworthy for its fine descriptions of the sea. Even *The Seafarer* must yield to its vivid pictures of the raging storm and to its account of man's titanic struggle with wind and wave.

Phoenix is partly an allegorical poem, based on a mythical Oriental bird, the one of its kind in all the world, that comes to a sacred altar at the end of five hundred years to be consumed in flames. Thereupon from the ashes arises a new-born phoenix to live the next five centuries. Here we find unusual brilliance of description; accounts of blessed lands afar, free from the stinging frost or the headlong dash of hail — a land of genial warmth abounding in fair fields and sunny groves. Evidently the author of this poem knew something of other realms than England.

21. The Coming of the Danes. The peaceful progress of the Anglo-Saxons was interrupted by invasions of marauding tribes of Danes who crossed the North Sea, first on plundering expeditions, but later with the evident intention of conquering the land. The warlike Anglo-Saxons who had wrested possession of Britain from the Celts were succeeded by generations of less virile descendants who were not a match for the hardy Danes. During the reign of King Alfred (871–901) the invaders succeeded in forcing the English army into the small kingdom of Wessex, south of the Thames. All the rest of England was for a time in their hands. Alfred's son, Edward the Elder, and his grandson, Athelstan, succeeded in driving back the Danes,

but during the inglorious reign of Aethelred the Unready (978–1016) the Danes and Northmen swarmed over England and finally drove the King from the throne after Aethelred had repeatedly bribed them with the payment of the so-called Danegeld to desist from their attacks. For more than twenty years the Danes ruled over England, until in 1042 Edward the Confessor became King. His long and peaceful reign covered a period to within a few months of the Norman Conquest.

The coming of the Danes had less influence on the language of England than might be supposed. Their language, like that of the Anglo-Saxons, was Teutonic in character and offered little that the Saxons did not already possess in their own tongue. The long-continued struggles for the fertile sections of the country, however, brought to an end the poetic activity of the preceding age. The new period

was one of prose, in which the writings were practical and educational in character. Only in a few instances did the old poetic inspiration reveal itself in a new outburst of warsong or of religious emotion.

22. King Alfred. No sovereign of England before the Norman Conquest was more deserving of the surname "the Great" than King Alfred, and no personality takes higher rank than his in the early literary history of his country.



Alfred Learning to Read

In fact, no country of western Europe could at that time boast of so rich and important a literature as Alfred brought into being during his reign. His grandfather Egbert had been the first King of united England; his father Aethelwulf,

had been succeeded on the throne by four sons, of whom Alfred was the youngest. The story of his life is familiar because of the many legends and anecdotes that have survived to our day. Born in 849, Alfred soon showed his attainments by learning to read before his three older brothers, thereby winning a prize offered by their mother. When he became King at twenty-two he quickly revealed the fine qualities of leadership that marked his entire reign. Many of the English monasteries and other seats of learning had been sacked by the Danes. Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Melrose, and Whitby had been either plundered or totally destroyed. Alfred promptly invited scholars from abroad and encouraged the study of Latin. But he was not satisfied merely to restore the learning that had flourished earlier in the quiet retreat of the Christian sanctuaries. He wished to bring the wisdom of the world within reach of the great mass of his people; he wanted to reach the uncultured group who could not pursue the severe mental discipline of the cloister. Alfred determined to make himself their teacher by translating for them important books on philosophy, history, and geography that had been written in Latin by learned men. More than this, he directed the scholars of his own day to gather the facts concerning the early history of the country and thus accumulate a mass of historical lore to be handed on to later generations. In his translations from the Latin he used good judgment in omitting, expanding, or changing any passages whenever he thought such changes would be for the benefit of his people.

Among the works that Alfred translated from the Latin were: *Pastoral Care*, by Pope Gregory, a book written for the guidance of clergy in caring for their flocks; the *History of the World*, written by the Spanish monk Orosius in the fifth century, to which Alfred added considerable material to bring its history and geography to date; the *Ecclesiastical*

History of Bede, wherein much of the original matter was omitted by Alfred; the *Consolation of Philosophy*, one of the great works of the Middle Ages, written by Boethius, a Roman of the sixth century. Boethius, who was often called "the last of the Romans," lived in the days of King Theodoric and was under sentence of death at the time he wrote this remarkable dialogue between himself and Philosophy.



King Alfred

There was much of the spirit of the Greek philosopher Plato in this work, which was frequently translated into other languages and was rendered into English at later periods by Chaucer and by Queen Elizabeth.

Alfred likewise translated for popular information a rather complicated Code of Laws, but this Code is of historical rather than literary interest. Other translations are attributed to Alfred on more or less plausible grounds, but enough is definitely known to be his work to make him beyond all question the most important figure in our early prose literature. We must remember that Alfred contributed a great deal of original matter to the texts that he rendered into English. He must not be

regarded as a mere translator of other men's ideas, but as one who took the best of what he found elsewhere and added his own valuable contribution for the education of his subjects.

23. Aelfric. Among the later writers of the period there is none so distinctive as Aelfric (955?-1025?), a theologian who followed the example set by Alfred. His compilations and translations were taken mainly from the writings of the Latin Fathers and consisted of *Homilies* and *Lives of the Saints*. Aelfric lived at Winchester, the most famous of

the schools of that period. His prose was not merely of very poetical character, but employed the grace of alliteration that was common to the poetry of that period. In addition to his English works he wrote a Latin grammar for the use of novices at Winchester and also a Latin *Colloquy* which describes an interesting conversation between a teacher, a novice, and several other persons representing the various occupations of the age. Aelfric was also one of the authors of an extensive paraphrase based on the first seven books of the Bible. Among the theologians who wrote in English there was no more important figure previous to the Reformation than Aelfric.

24. The Chronicle. The English Chronicle, which was probably begun in the reign of Alfred, was continued year by year in several copies that existed in various parts of the land. All kinds of events—church history, wars, eclipses, current happenings, and what not—were recorded. It was continued as late as 1154, so that its language, which at first was the pure Old English of the tenth century, changed to a well-defined Middle English before



Peterborough Cathedral

the narrative came to an end at Peterborough in the days of King Stephen. This lengthy compilation is a most important source of material for historical writers, though many of the earlier entries, copied from Bede and similar Latin sources, were of very uncertain authority. The entry for each year varies from one line to several pages. A few modernized extracts will give some idea of its historical value:

671. This year happened the great destruction among fowls.
774. This year there appeared a red cross in the sky after sunset; and the Mercians and the Kentish men fought together at Otford, and wondrous serpents were seen in the South Saxon's land.
991. This year Ipswich was harried; and shortly after that the aldorman Bryhtnoth was slain at Maldon. And in that year it was decreed for the first time that tribute should be paid to the Danes because of the great fear which they wrought on the sea coast; it was, at first, ten thousand pounds. Archbishop Siric first gave that counsel.

The second incident mentioned under the year 991 was the subject of a virile poem called *The Battle of Maldon*, or *Bryhtnoth's Death*, which describes how heroically the English went down in defeat in that terrible slaughter. It is interesting to note that in the later entries of the Chronicle are several poems. The best of these is *The Battle of Brunanburh*, celebrating the great victory (937) of Alfred's grandson Athelstan over the Danes. Tennyson made a splendid translation of that poem into modern English.

25. Development of the Language. The language of the Old English period represented a diversity of dialects that varied in pronunciation, in grammatical inflections, and in vocabulary. In the course of time these differences became less marked and a more uniform speech prevailed throughout England. During the earlier period the greatest literary activity was in Northumbria and the texts of the early poets are for the most part in northern dialects. In the later periods, when prose became predominant, the literary supremacy passed to Wessex. The works of Alfred and of Aelfric were written in the southern dialect. It was formerly supposed that the Anglo-Saxons had borrowed extensively from Celtic dialects when they conquered England, but we now know that this was not the case. Place names, however, were frequently retained, so that the Celtic name of a river or mountain may persist to this day. Thus *Avon*

or *Esk* means *water*, *Pen* or *Ben* means *mountain*. From the Latin *castra* (*fortified camp*) developed such place names as *Tadcaster*, *Doncaster*, *Worcester*, and *Cirencester*. From the Danish *by* (*town or settlement*) came such names as *Whitby*, *Grimsby*, and *Somersby*. A few Latin words, like *wine*, *pound*, *wall*, and *street*, had entered the language while the Anglo-Saxons still lived on the Continent. Most of the borrowings of the Old English period were church words, such as *apostle*, *bishop*, *alms*, *creed*, *organ*, *candle*, *priest*, and *monk*. Borrowings from the Danish are less easy to determine, because they belong to the same Teutonic stock, but we may set down *cast*, *die*, *drown*, *happy*, *haven*, *low*, *meek*, *scare*, *skill*, *skin*, *sky*, and *take* as Danish words. In spite of the devotion to learning manifested in the monasteries and other religious establishments of those days, the English language was still a group of rather diverse dialects when the Old English period drew to a close at the time of the Norman Conquest.

CHAPTER II

THE ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD

1. **The Norman Conquest.** Probably no other event in English history had such a significant influence upon English literature as the overthrow of Saxon power at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. William, Duke of Normandy, had no strong claim to the English throne, but he was an ambitious man bent upon extending his domain. The Normans (really North-men) were originally of the same Teutonic stock as the Anglo-Saxons. About the ninth century they settled in France, intermarried with the inhabitants, and accepted the French language as their own. During the next two centuries they developed those racial qualities that made them very different from the Anglo-Saxon in mental and physical characteristics. The Normans became a lithe, alert, and highly imaginative race; the Anglo-Saxons were inclined to be stolid, sluggish, and slow-witted. The Saxons, however, possessed the admirable traits of perseverance, stability, and common-sense that were apt to be lacking in the Normans. When William landed on the southern coast of Britain to give battle to Harold, who had been elected King after the death of Edward the Confessor, there may have been some doubt as to the result of the ensuing battle; there is no doubt that the decisive victory of the Normans was for the lasting benefit of England. William the Conqueror, as he was then called, gave the country a strongly centralized government, and though he ruled with a hand of iron was, in the main, a just king for those rough times. Poets and novelists of later

periods have made a heroic figure of Harold, defending to the death the liberties of Saxon England against the unprincipled Norman invader, but we should not be blind to the great advantage gained by England, which speedily became the best-governed country in Europe and developed those traditions of government that were to decide her place in the modern world.

2. Norman Influence in England. It is well to remember that Norman influence began long before the Conquest. In 1016, when Aethelred the Unready fled from the Danes, he took with him to Normandy his son Edward, who eventually became King of England as Edward the Confessor in 1042. Edward brought Norman followers in his train and established Norman traditions in England during the quarter century preceding the arrival of William on English shores. When William set up the rigid rule that was maintained by most of his immediate successors, Norman-French became the official language of the court and of the aristocracy. No effort was made to suppress English, but those who clung to the mother-tongue were socially inferior to the group that used French. The feudal system, which had



Lincoln Cathedral

become highly organized in Normandy, was now developed to a greater degree in England. William's followers took over the estates that had been held by the Saxons who fought with Harold. Some forty or more great barons who were followers of William now directed the implanting of Norman culture in all parts of England. In the Church the same shifting of power was brought about, but more gradually. Whenever a Saxon bishop or abbot died or happened to be deposed, his successor was usually a Norman. The new bishops made the seats of their bishoprics in the largest town of each diocese. Soon after began the zealous building of the great cathedrals and abbeys that stand to this day as enduring monuments of medieval English architecture. Perhaps the most vital influence for the literary development of England was the coming of scholars from the schools of Paris and elsewhere to bring about a closer union between the learned group at Oxford and on the Continent. Through these scholars England got its first acquaintance with the learning of the East which filtered through Europe by way of the universities of Italy and France.

3. Fusion of the People. In spite of the social distinctions between the Norman conquerors and the defeated Saxons, marriages soon took place between the races, and there was a gradual blending into a new race that combined the best characteristics of the parent stocks. For a long time after the Conquest the upper classes observed Norman traditions and used the Norman-French language, while the peasantry and the common people of the towns clung to their Saxon customs and to the English language, but the fusion of the two races was inevitable. Intermarriages were most common at first among the lower classes, but William the Conqueror's own son Henry, who ruled as Henry I (1100-1135), married Eadgyth, a descendant of the old English kings. She changed her name to Matilda, because

the Normans could not pronounce Eadgyth. Through her the blood of Egbert and of Alfred was transmitted to later monarchs, so that the present ruler of the British Empire can claim direct descent from the first of the Anglo-Saxon kings. The fact that the third of the Norman rulers had chosen a Saxon queen probably helped to bring about a better feeling between the two civilizations. Henry I likewise showed his wisdom in granting privileges to the towns and in winning the support of the common people against the Norman barons, who were becoming turbulent and threatening the power of the throne. Not only did the Saxons benefit by the King's policy, but they thus achieved an important step toward the idea of representative government, which helped to make of England a strong and united people long before similar conditions prevailed in continental countries.

4. The English Language. The Norman Conquest, among other things, brought about a condition whereby three languages were used in England. Latin, which was the universal language of scholarship in the Middle Ages, was the medium employed regularly in the monasteries and the schools for ordinary discourse as well as for religious literature and other writings. The impression prevailed that anything worth committing to parchment should be written in Latin, so that it might be read and understood everywhere. French, as the language of the court, was used in the royal councils and later in the proceedings of the English Parliament. All law courts were conducted in French, which for several centuries was recognized as the official language of the realm. English, the language that had come down from the Anglo-Saxon period, continued with characteristic persistency as the language of the common people. It was used by the inhabitants of the towns as well as by the peasantry on the feudal manors. Its persistence was in part due to the policy of William the

Conqueror, who did not attempt to suppress the native tongue. He knew that the task of bringing the country completely under his sway would be difficult enough without undertaking to force his own language upon the people. As a result English continued to be spoken by all classes, because even the nobles and the churchmen had to become



A Medieval Scribe

familiar with the language in order to transact any affairs in which the common people were concerned. This condition prevailed for about three centuries after the Conquest, but not without bringing about important changes in the English language, which was naturally influenced by the extensive use of French and Latin near at hand. These changes were so significant that they claim attention before we consider the literature that was

produced in the new language of what is called the Middle English period. They included the gradual falling away of inflections and the loss of gender, as well as the substitution of the principle of word-borrowing for the older method of word-building.

5. Changes in Inflection. In Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, as it is still sometimes called, nouns, adjectives, verbs, and other parts of speech had inflections such as we find in modern German or in classical Latin and Greek. If we wish to read our own language of a thousand years ago, we must learn declensions and conjugations as we do in studying the foreign languages just mentioned. Thus the word for *stone* was *stān*, and in the singular number it was declined thus: nominative *stān*, accusative *stān*, dative *stāne*, genitive *stānes*; in the plural these cases were *stānas*,

stānas, stānum, stāna. The noun *ēage*, meaning *eye*, was similarly declined *ēage, ēage, ēagan, ēagan*; plural *ēagan, ēagan, ēagum, ēagena*. Under the influence of the Norman-French, which was comparatively free from inflected forms, our own case endings fell away. We have no dative or accusative forms to-day. *Stone* serves for all singular cases except the genitive *stone's*; and *stones* for all plural cases except the genitive *stones'*. Simplification of the adjectives and pronouns was even more striking. Thus the adjective *cwic*, meaning *alive*, had eight different endings in the thirty forms that represented the three genders of five cases, singular and plural. To-day we have one form alone to cover every use of the adjective. There were similar varying forms for each of the five cases in three genders of such pronouns as *who, this, that*, etc. Few traces remain in modern English of the complicated system of inflections that formerly prevailed; most of the survivals are in the pronouns, as in *they, their, them; he, his, him; who, whose, whom*.

6. Loss of Gender. When we begin to study Latin we may wonder why in that language *hortus* (a garden) should be masculine, *mensa* (a table) feminine, and *corpus* (a body) neuter. Such arbitrary genders also occur in German, where the word for *table* is masculine, *wall* is feminine, but *woman* and *girl* are neuter. A German eats his neuter *breakfast* with a masculine *spoon*, a feminine *fork*, and a neuter *knife*. In French the *knife* is masculine, while the *fork* and *spoon* are feminine. We are thankful, of course, that all such words are neuter in English and that we do not have to bother about gender. In Old English, however, gender had to be carefully observed, just as in the classics, or in French and German. *Earm* (an arm) and *fōt* (a foot) were masculine, while *heorte* (a heart) and *hand* (a hand) were feminine, but *bearn* (a child) and *maegden* (a maiden) were neuter. Again, *mōdor* (a mother) was feminine, but *wīf* (a woman) was neuter. It is a great advantage for

modern English to be free from such illogical distinctions of gender.

7. Word-building. In the early Teutonic tongues new words were frequently created by compounding other words already in the language. Old English literature abounds in instances. For example, *burg-lēode* (*city-people*) meant *citizens*; *leorning-cild* (*learning-child*) meant a *pupil*; and *leorning-cniht* (*learning-knight*) meant a *disciple*. Likewise *forþ-faran* (*fare-forth*) meant to *die*, and *þurh-drīfan* (*drive through*) meant to *pierce*. Many prefixes and suffixes helped to build up a group of useful words that have survived in modern forms. Thus *-hood* made possible *manhood*, *childhood*, *priesthood*; *-dom* was used in *freedom*, *kingdom*, and *wisdom*; *be-* gave a special significance to *bespeak*, *bepaint*, and *bepraise*. Most Teutonic tongues still make considerable use of this device to create new words and occasionally evolve rather clumsy compounds. The tendency in Middle English was to introduce new and simpler words borrowed from foreign sources instead of building upon words already in the language.

8. Growth of Vocabulary. As the two languages English and French were spoken side by side throughout England during the Anglo-Norman period, it was inevitable that English should borrow extensively from the French for the enlargement of its own vocabulary.



Furness Abbey

Moreover, short and direct French words in many instances drove out the more cumbersome words that had come down from the Anglo-Saxon period. Many of the most useful words in our language to-day were introduced during the three cen-

turies that followed the Norman Conquest. Some of these words had to do with military affairs, others with the administration of justice, still others with gentility and courtesy. In these three classes alone we find such words as *arms, banner, battle, peace, siege, court, justice, plead; noble, grace, valor, gentle, chivalry, and favor*. New titles of rank such as *prince, duke, marquis, viscount, and baron* were added to the familiar Saxon titles of *king* and *earl*; military rank was indicated by such words as *captain* and *sergeant*; degrees of family relationship were indicated by such new names as *uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, and cousin*. Numerous other words in the domain of architecture, clothing, cookery, and sport reveal how extensive was the influence of Norman-French in building up the vocabulary of the English tongue.

9. Advantages of the Composite Tongue. The English language benefited greatly by the influence of Norman-French upon its inflections and its vocabulary. Not only did it become a more comprehensive language, but it obtained a flexibility and grace that would have been impossible in the Anglo-Saxon period. From the first, Anglo-Saxon was a sonorous language, admirably adapted for the fine old battle epics that were sung by the ancient scop, but it needed a certain lightness of touch, a freeing of its vocabulary from cumbersome compounds and rigid rules of inflection before it could vie with the French and other modern languages as a suitable vehicle for the clearest expression of thought. As we study the successive periods of English literature it is interesting to note the increasing vocabulary of borrowed words and the gradual development of an elastic prose style in place of the earlier rigidity that prevailed until after the time of Shakespeare.

10. Expulsion of French. For some time after the Conquest the scholars of England held the French language and French traditions of civilization in high esteem. They flocked to the University of Paris, which attracted the most

learned men of the day, and they brought back to England the best that French culture had to offer. After a while, however, differences arose, and eventually France was separated politically from England. The English kings still laid claim to the throne of France and in 1338 began the Hundred Years' War with that country. By that time English ardor for French civilization had died away. The



Wells Cathedral

fact dawned upon England that she had a language of her own, fully equal to all her needs. It was during the beneficent reign of Edward III (1327-1377) that English finally came into its own. In 1362 the King ordered Parliament and the law courts to conduct all their proceedings in

English. He set the example by having his Chancellor open Parliament with an English speech, and thereafter he made it the established language of his court. In the face of such royal favor French no longer had any hold upon England and gradually dropped out of current use.

11. Literature of the Period. Much of the early literature of the Anglo-Norman period was written in Latin. There was a remarkable revival of interest in scholarship after the coming of the Normans. This movement reached its height in the reign of Henry II and is represented to-day by a great mass of Latin chronicles written mostly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They are naturally of more interest to the historian than to the student of literature, but several of these scholarly chronicles deserve mention. William of Malmesbury (1095?-1143?) recorded in

his Latin chronicle the history of England from the earliest time to his own day. Finding his inspiration in the work of Bede and taking the venerable Saxon's history as a point of departure, he collected from various sources the material for his own record, which extends to the year 1142. Milton regarded William as the best chronicler of that age and posterity has not reversed the decision. He was able to impart a picturesque quality to his narrative without sacrificing accuracy of statement. Second only to William in popularity was Henry of Huntingdon (1084–1155) who wrote in Latin his *History of the English*. His work, which was compiled between 1125 and 1154, is less highly esteemed by scholars to-day because he was much inferior to William in scholarship and in literary ability. He wrote under the patronage of the Bishop of Lincoln, to whom he dedicated the chronicle.

12. Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100–1154). For the student of literature Geoffrey of Monmouth is by far the most important of all the chroniclers. His *History of the Kings of*



Tintagel, Cornwall — Reputed Birthplace of King Arthur

Britain, written in Latin about 1148, may readily be accepted as the greatest literary product of the century. Geoffrey undertook to fill in long gaps of British history that had baffled other chroniclers, and he professed to have access to an ancient Celtic book of which other writers were ignorant. With this alleged source of material at hand he threw light upon the dark periods of the kings who ruled in Britain

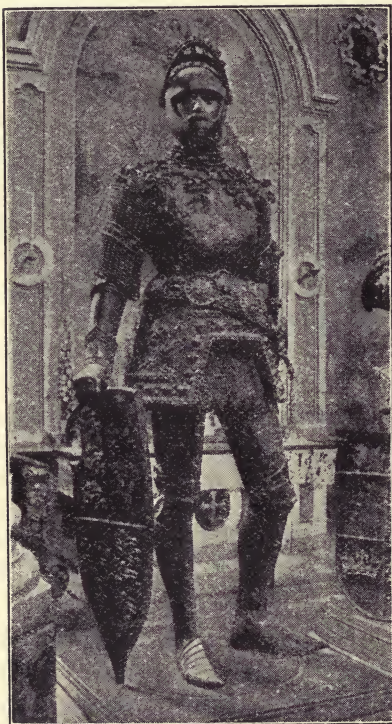
from before the Christian era to the traditional Celtic King Cadwalader in 689. All this he accomplished with amazing detail. Even in his own day Geoffrey was suspected of relying largely upon his imagination in his glowing narrative of the romantic past. Later historians denounced him for his deceptions and refused to take him seriously, but literature is most deeply indebted to him. In his pages were gathered the stories of King Lear and of Cymbeline, which were later to furnish Shakespeare with the plots of two great plays; likewise the story of Sabrina, who figures in Milton's *Comus*; and, most important of all, the rich collection of stories associated with King Arthur and his knights. These legends attracted the favorable attention of Milton as a subject for epic treatment and later proved such an abundant source of material for Tennyson and other poets of the nineteenth century.

13. Gaimar and Wace. Contemporary writers who used the French language were not slow to recognize the interesting literary character of Geoffrey's chronicle. An Anglo-Norman author named Gaimar, who lived in the north of England, appears to have rendered the *History of the Kings of Britain* into French verse about 1150, but the work has been lost. A courtly Norman named Wace next undertook the task and completed it in 1155, dedicating the work to Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II. Wace did more, however, than merely translate Geoffrey. He added much material of his own, introducing legends that were probably unknown to Geoffrey of Monmouth. In Wace we find the first mention of the Order of the Round Table, instituted by King Arthur to settle all matters of precedence among his knights. Wace's *Brut*, as he called it, is a poem of over 15,000 lines and represents an interesting stage of development between the prose chronicles that purport to be history and the metrical romances that are acknowledged to be fiction.

14. Layamon's Brut. Early in the thirteenth century an English priest, Layamon, who dwelt at Ernley in Worcestershire, conceived the noble plan of telling in English verse the story of Britain from the time of the Flood. He finally concluded to begin with the fall of Troy, the arrival of Brutus in Britain, and to end with King Cadwalader. He mentions Wace's *Brut* as a source of his own poem, which, however, extends beyond 32,000 lines, or more than twice the length of the French poem. Layamon added considerable material that is not to be found in Geoffrey nor in Wace. In fact, the character of his work is such that he should be regarded as a creative poet, not as a mere translator. His *Brut* is undoubtedly the most important poetical work of the period up to the time of Chaucer. Rhyme occurs occasionally in the poem, but the spirit is mainly that of the earlier age.

15. The Arthurian Legend. It would be interesting to linger in the fairyland of the Arthurian story and to learn of the many romantic stories associated with that admirable king. From a half-mythical figure of the fifth century, who may have led his Christian knights against the heathen Saxon, he has become one of the outstanding heroes of world literature. Gradually there came to be linked with him the stories of other heroes, such as Gawain, Perceval, Lancelot, and Tristram, as well as the beautiful story of the Holy Grail. In the earlier stories Arthur was not always the perfect king, the matchless knight that modern poetry has made him; his character varied in keeping with the part he played in the romance. As Layamon tells the story, Arthur at birth was favored by the elves, who bestowed upon him riches, long life, and various noble qualities. He became king at fifteen, later waged war against the Picts, Scots, and Saxons. He reëstablished the churches destroyed by the heathen and wedded Wenhaver (Guenevere) in Cornwall. Other lands were conquered and he became the

greatest king in all the world. At Caerleon he maintained a court more splendid than that of Rome. When Rome demanded tribute of him, he declared war, and leaving his Queen in the care of his nephew Modred, proceeded against



King Arthur

the Roman emperor. Arthur defeated and slew his foe, and was about to enter Rome when in a dream he learned that Modred had usurped the throne. Thereupon the King returned and defeated Modred in a terrific battle in which Arthur himself suffered eleven wounds. The King then announced he would go to Avalon, where the Queen of the Elves would cure his wounds, and he would later return to rule in joy over the Britons. He was then borne off in a boat across the waters to Avalon, where, in the belief of the Britons,

he still lives to return in due time to his own people. Layamon in his *Brut* thus describes the passing of Arthur:

And ich wulle varen to Avalun
To vairest alre maidene,
To Argante there quene,
Alven swithe sceone;

And I will fare to Avalon
To fairest of all maidens
To Argante the Queen
Elf exceeding beautiful

And heo scal mine wunden
Makien alle isunde,
Al hal me makien
Mid haleweiye drenchen.
And seothe ich cumen wulle
To mine kineriche
And wunien mid Brutten
Mid muchelere wunne.

And she shall my wounds
Make all sound
All whole me make
With healing draughts
And afterwards I shall come
To my kingdom
And dwell with the Britons
With great joy.

16. Arthurian Characters. Among the knights and other characters who are conspicuous in the Arthurian romances we find several that figure prominently in later literature. There are numerous stories concerning Merlin, the aged bard and magician who gave Arthur supernatural power to defeat his enemies. Other legends tell of Lancelot of the Lake, chief of Arthur's knights, who unwittingly wins the love of the beauteous Maid of Ascolat (Astolat). Perceval (Parsifal) was another distinguished hero and is especially associated with the Quest of the Holy Grail. Sir Galahad was the purest and noblest of all the knights — a man after Arthur's own heart. Sir Tristram was the hero of an unfortunate love-affair with the beautiful Iseult — a tragic love-story that has inspired many a modern poet. The most popular of all the Arthurian heroes was undoubtedly Sir Gawayne, who was the nephew of King Arthur and much like him in character. In some of the later romances he is not pictured as a noble character, but in the greatest of all the English Arthurian stories, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, which was composed about 1370, he plays a leading part.

17. Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight. On New Year's Day, while Arthur and his knights kept their feast at Camelot, a gigantic figure clad in green and riding a green steed came into their midst and boldly presented a challenge. He would permit any knight to strike him with an ax on condition that a year hence at the Green Chapel the Green Knight should give a return blow. King Arthur was about to

accept when Sir Gawayne stepped forward to take up the challenge. He agreed to the conditions, took up his battle-ax and with one blow cut off the Green Knight's head. The stranger thereupon picked up his own head, remounted his steed, and after reminding Sir Gawayne of his appointment at the Green Chapel a year hence, rode away.

When the year had almost rolled by, Gawayne mounted his steed and started for the Green Chapel. He endured terrible storms and fought with savage monsters on the way. On Christmas Eve, realizing that he was lost in a vast forest, he prayed to Heaven for aid. Thereupon he beheld a great castle where he was received and welcomed by an aged Lord whose young wife was the most beautiful woman Gawayne had ever seen. From them he learned that the Green Chapel was but two miles farther on, so he agreed to stay with them till New Year's Day. The Lord of the Castle arranged to go hunting on the next three days and suggested to Sir Gawayne that each evening they should exchange whatever good thing they received that day. After the Lord had left on the first day, his beautiful young wife tried to induce Gawayne to make love to her. He courteously rebuffed her, so after giving him a kiss she went away. That evening the Lord gave Gawayne the spoils of a deer hunt, and Gawayne gave his host a kiss. The next day, after the Lord had departed, his wife again sought to win Gawayne's love, and when he refused she gave him two kisses before she departed. In the evening when the Lord handed over the trophies of a boar hunt, Gawayne gave him two kisses. The third day was marked by the greatest temptation. The wife offered Gawayne a ring as the token of her love, but he refused to take it. She then offered him a magic green girdle, which would protect him from all wounds. Mindful of his coming ordeal at the Green Chapel, Gawayne accepted the girdle, together with the three kisses that she gave him before they parted. When the Lord

returned that evening from a fox hunt and delivered his spoils, Gawayne gave him three kisses, but said nothing about the green girdle, which he intended to keep for his meeting with the terrible Green Knight.

On New Year's Day Sir Gawayne proceeded to the Green Chapel, a horrible cave in a green mound where he heard the Green Knight within sharpening his ax. Soon the Knight came forth and Gawayne prepared for the blow. Twice he flinched as the Knight struck at him, but the third time he was slightly wounded. When he complained that the agreement called for only one blow, the Green Knight explained everything. He was the Lord of the castle. The challenge, the temptation, and the blows were meant to test Gawayne's fidelity to the King, his virtue, and his courage. Stricken with remorse, Gawayne offered the magic girdle to the Green Knight, but was directed to keep it, with the reminder that his slight wound was sufficient atonement for his failure to keep the compact. Gawayne returned to the court and related his adventures. Thereafter the Knights of the Round Table agreed to wear a green girdle in his honor.

18. Cycles of Romance. Other heroes than those of the Arthurian group were the subjects of similar cycles of romance. One series of stories dealt with the adventures of Charlemagne and his great knight Roland. A second group had Godfrey of Bouillon for their hero and related his valiant exploits during the Crusades. A third cycle dealt with the conquests of Alexander the Great, while a fourth series included various legends connected with the siege and fall of Troy. These four were the most important groups of the themes chosen from continental sources, but many minor semi-historical or legendary tales were related by the medieval poets in England as well as in France and in Italy.

19. King Horn. Among the Germanic heroes of metrical romance none seems to have been more popular than King

Horn, whose story may be traced back to the days when the Danes invaded England. The romance is preserved in a manuscript of the period 1250-1260. Horn was the son of King Murray of Suddene. When he was a boy of fifteen his father was slain by the Saracens. They spared the boy because of his beauty, but became so terrified at his strength that they sent him off to sea. Horn reached the land of Westernesse, where he was well received by the King and educated. Later the King's daughter Rymenhild fell in love with Horn. He longed for an opportunity to show his prowess and slew a band of pagans who had come to ravage the land. Soon after Horn was accused of plotting to kill the King and was banished. He went to Ireland, where, under the name of Cutberd, he entered the service of the King of that country. He fought so valiantly against the pagans that the Irish King offered Cutberd his throne and the hand of his daughter in marriage. Horn, who still thought of Rymenhild, held off from accepting for seven years. In the meantime Rymenhild was wooed by a King whom she dared not refuse. News of her intended marriage reached Horn. He promptly returned and slew the intended husband and his followers. Horn then revealed his identity to Rymenhild's father and returned to the land of the Saracens to wreak vengeance on them for killing his father. After causing havoc among the pagans and building churches he was warned in a dream that a false friend Fikenhild sought to marry Rymenhild. Again he returned to her country where, disguised as a pilgrim, he made his way into Fikenhild's castle and killed the traitor. He and his Queen Rymenhild thereafter lived happily in Suddene.

20. The Lay of Havelok. Another good metrical tale based on Teutonic legend is that of Havelok the Dane, whose adventures may have been those of a historical personage of the tenth century. King Aethelwold of England,

when at the point of death, intrusted his little daughter Goldborough to Earl Godrich of Cornwall to bring her up and eventually marry her to the best man in the kingdom. At the same time the dying King of Denmark left his young son Havelok and two infant daughters to the care of Earl Godard. To serve his own ambitions, Godard murdered the girls and delivered Havelok to Grim, a fisherman, directing him to drown the boy. That night, however, Grim and his wife saw a bright flame coming from the mouth of the sleeping Havelok and found the royal mark upon his shoulder. By these signs they recognized Havelok as the heir to the Danish throne. They fled to England, landed at the mouth of the Humber, and founded the town of Grimsby. Havelok was brought up as one of their own children and became very strong. When famine came to the land, Havelok, who had developed a wonderful appetite, knew that Grim could no longer feed him, and therefore he became a servant to the cook of Earl Godrich. In a contest at putting the stone, Havelok revealed himself as the strongest man in England. Godrich heard of his prowess and resolved to marry the King's daughter Goldborough to this low-born Havelok so that she might thereby forfeit her claim to the throne of England. In spite of her protest they were married, and Havelok took his royal bride to Grimsby. When Havelok fell asleep and Goldborough beheld the bright flame from his mouth and the royal mark on his shoulder, she hardly needed the assurance of the angel's voice that told her she had been married to a king's son. With Grim and his family the royal pair returned to Denmark, where Havelok enlisted the aid of faithful friends of his dead father. They organized an army, marched against Earl Godard, and hanged the traitor. Havelok was then crowned King of Denmark. Soon after he invaded England, met and defeated Earl Godrich, and had him burned at the stake. All England then came under Havelok's rule. He made Grim's

sons barons and married Grim's daughters to powerful earls. Thereafter Havelok and Goldborough ruled happily over England for sixty years. Of their fifteen sons and daughters every son became a king and every daughter a queen.

21. Other Teutonic Heroes. Medieval romances tell of other heroes whose exploits were dear to those who loved to hear of adventure and who admired the display of cour-



Painting by Pettie

The Vigil

age in battle or in single combat. Guy of Warwick was the central figure of several spirited romances that have survived. Bevis of Hampton was but little less popular than Guy. His story was told and retold in nearly every language of Europe from Irish in the west to Russian in the east. Generally these tales were related in a plain, blunt style, without any attempt to account for incidents that modern readers would consider improbable. Havelok

seizes a club and kills twenty men before any one can aid him; Guy of Warwick kills a dragon and a giant; Bevis of Hampton spends seven years in a dungeon with only a stick to protect himself from the monsters that infest the place. Narratives such as these were clearly intended for simple-minded folk who liked plenty of unusual adventure in romance and who wanted incidents to happen in quick succession. At times we may feel that these old romances were drawn out to an unreasonable length, but we must not forget that they pleased those for whom they were written.

22. Bestiaries. From a very early period the Church used stories about animals to teach doctrine or to point a moral. Such stories were as popular in England as on the Continent. One important *Bestiary* has survived from the period 1200–1250. It relates the nature and habits of each creature, sometimes with very little regard for truth, and then proceeds to interpret a lesson. Such animals as the lion, the serpent, the eagle, the fox, the spider, and even the mermaid are described very curiously, though the moral to be drawn from the illustration is sometimes far from apparent. Thus the elephant and the whale are described:

Elephants live in India. They are burly creatures that go about in herds. They take care not to fall, because they cannot get up again without help. When the elephant rests he leans against a tree. The hunter therefore saws the tree half through and watches. When the elephant comes and leans against the tree, both beast and tree fall to the ground. He calls for help, but his companions try in vain to raise him. A young elephant approaches and with his snout helps up the old one. In this way the hunter is cheated. . . . Just so Adam fell through a tree. Moses and the Prophets vainly sought to aid him. Christ came down as a man and raised Adam and all mankind that had fallen into dark hell.

The whale is the greatest of all fish. When floating he looks like an island. Whenever he gets hungry, he gapes wide and emits a sweet scent by which other fish are drawn into his

mouth. Then he shuts his jaws. The fish are sucked in, but only the little ones are caught; he cannot grip the big ones. In fair weather the whale lives at the bottom of the sea, but he comes to the surface in a storm. Sailors mistake him for an island, cast anchor, and land on him. They light a fire to warm themselves; they eat and drink. The whale feels the fire, dives to the bottom, and drowns them all. . . . The Devil is like the whale. He tempts men to sin and ruin. It is the little ones he ensnares; he cannot catch those who are steadfast. Whoso listens to the Devil's teaching will rue it sorely; whoso putteth trust in him will follow him down to dim hell.

23. Religious Poems. During this period a number of serious moral poems were written, for the most part by inhabitants of the monasteries who were intent upon the salvation of humanity. These poems reflected a very different spirit from the wild pagan chants of battle and of boisterous adventure by land and sea. It can hardly be said that these religious poems are very interesting to us to-day. Most of them are rather long and prosy, in spite of the good intentions of the excellent men who wrote them. Their influence on literature was such, however, that we should know a few facts about them.

24. Poema Morale. The *Poema Morale*, or *Moral Ode*, was written about 1150 and is one of the most important of early English poems. It has a remarkably smooth and regular rhythm for so early a composition and it is rhymed throughout in couplets. It begins

Ich aem elder þen ich wes a wintre and alore
Ic waelde more þanne ic dude mi wit ah to ben more.

which means

I am older than I was in winters and in lore
I wield more (power) than I did my wisdom ought to be more.

The author proceeds to lament the failures of his life and shows how easy it is to stray from the right path. He urges every one to make the best use of his opportunities

and thus avoid the terrors of the Last Judgment. The poem is really a versified sermon of about four hundred lines, and is significant because it is the first English work to show the regular accent and rhyme that were undoubtedly borrowed from the Latin poems written at that period by the monastic authors.

25. The Ormulum. A priest named Orm had the doubtful distinction of producing, about the year 1200, one of the dullest poems in the whole range of literature. In nearly 20,000 monotonous unrhymed verses the *Ormulum* presents an uninspired paraphrase of the Gospels, with an explanation for the benefit of the unlearned. Our only interest lies in the peculiar system of spelling devised by Orm in writing his poem. This consisted of doubling a consonant after every short vowel in the words used by the poet. The *Ormulum* thus has some significance for students of our language, but lovers of good literature would find the poem dull, no matter how it is spelled. A few lines will suffice as specimens of Orm's effort:

biss boc iss nemmedd Orrmulum
forrþi þatt Orrm itt wrohhte
annd itt iss wrohht off quapþrgan
off goddspellbokess fowwre.

This book is named Ormulum
Because Orm it wrought
And it is wrought from the quadriga
From the gospel-books four.

26. Cursor Mundi. In a vast poem of over 24,000 lines an unknown Northumbrian author undertook (about 1300-1325) to tell the history of the Seven Ages of the world from Creation to the Day of Doom, with special reference to the Bible story. The *Cursor Mundi* (or *Overrunner of the World*) is really a religious encyclopedia in verse. The poet deplored the fact that other persons wasted so much of their time in reading romances and

similar vain stories of love and adventure; he proposed to give his readers a version of sacred story more interesting than the foolish tales that had caught their fancy. Many attractive stories and legends were interwoven with the Biblical narrative to accomplish his worthy intention, but it cannot be said that he lured the plain folk away from the popular stories of Arthur, Alexander, Charlemagne, and other worldly heroes.

27. Handlyng Synne. In 1303 a Lincolnshire author named **Robert Manning of Brunne** (Bourne) wrote a poem of about 12,000 lines and called it *Handlyng Synne*, or *Manual of Sins*. It is really a free translation of two works written in Norman-French by earlier poets, discoursing on the nature of the Seven Deadly Sins, which were Pride, Envy, Anger, Idleness, Covetousness, Gluttony, and Lust. Unlike the earlier religious poems that have been mentioned, *Handlyng Synne* is a work of considerable charm. It is really a collection of stories to illustrate the various sins that were considered deadly. Manning showed excellent judgment in avoiding dull material in his poem. He wrote simply and directly, so that he might be better understood by ignorant men. Quite apart from its literary quality, *Handlyng Synne* is an interesting presentation of the life of that period. Manning condemns tournaments and public performances of Biblical plays as leading to sin; he censures avaricious landlords and unjust stewards; he even denounces the vain, idle men in religious orders who were a little later to receive the scornful lashing of Chaucer's vigorous satire. Manning had no patience with crafty, sinful men, nor with vain and silly women who spent most of their time in adorning themselves, but he showed a warm tenderness for children and urged that they should be treated with consideration.

28. Ancren Riwe. In the great mass of religious prose produced during the Anglo-Norman period there is only

one work that claims special attention. The *Ancren Riwe* (or *Rule for Anchoresses*) was composed about 1225 by an unknown author. It was written for the guidance of three ladies of Dorsetshire who intended to live in seclusion from the world. There are eight parts, dealing with every phase of their prospective outward and inward life. Hardly any useful admonition concerning their conduct, regulation of domestic affairs, or avoidance of temptation was overlooked by the zealous counselor. They were told what to eat, what to wear, and how long to sleep. They were to keep silent at meals, not to speak with any man often or long, not to put any faith in dreams, and not to possess any beast except one cat. They were, however, permitted to wash themselves as often as they pleased; moreover, they were admonished to read their *Ancren Riwe* every day and to offer a prayer for him who wrote it. The author must have had some trouble in getting together so much good advice into one book; he called Heaven to witness that he would rather undertake the pilgrimage to Rome than to write the book over.

29. Disputations. From the earliest times the dialogue or disputation between speakers was a popular literary medium to impart information or to draw a moral. In such classical writers as Plato and Lucian the dialogue was frequently used, and the early Christian fathers found it most effective in their teaching. Almost every language of western Europe affords examples of such composition. In English the surviving literature includes a *Debate between the Body and the Soul*, in which each accuses the other of bringing about the moral downfall of the deceased knight over whose bier they are wrangling. Another dialogue poem is *The Owl and the Nightingale*, wherein the poet hears the two birds disparaging each other and immodestly praising their own talents. They engage in a long debate, pitting argument against argument, until other birds are attracted

to the scene. There is about to be an open quarrel when the wren bids them keep the king's peace and submit their case to a judge. The birds then fly away to the home of the arbitrator, but the poet does not claim to know the decision. This remarkable composition is one of the best imaginative poems in the language up to the time of Chaucer. It reveals a fine appreciation of nature and a clearly defined national tone that is lacking in earlier work. The unknown poet was evidently a man of good humor, broad outlook on life, and sound judgment. He paved the way for *The Thrush and the Nightingale*, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, and similar disputations.

30. Lyrical Poetry. A considerable number of short emotional poems have come down to us from the Anglo-Norman period. Most of these are of a religious character, as comparatively few of the English singers chose such subjects as mirth, nature, and love, which were popular among the poets of France and Provence at that period. Of the nonreligious lyrics one of the oldest (about 1200-1225) is the *Cuckoo Song*, which begins

Sumer is i-cumen in
Lhude sing cuccu
Groweth sed and bloweth
med
And springeth the wde nu
Sing cuccu, cuccu.

Summer is coming in
Sing loud cuckoo
Groweth seed and bloometh
meadow
And springeth the wood now
Sing cuckoo, cuckoo.

Here the singer has admirably caught the spirit of the awakening of new life in spring. The same delight in spring is revealed by the love-lorn author of *Alysoun* (about 1300), a lyric describing the beauty of his sweetheart and begging her to show gracious favor to his suit. During the same period we find the beautiful song beginning

Lenten ys come with love to toune,
With blosmen ant with briddes rounne.

Spring is come with love to town
With blossom and with birds' song.

There is also lyric appreciation of the winter season:

Wynter wakeneth al my care
 Nou this leves waxeth bare
 Ofte I sike (sigh) ant mourne sare (sorely)
 When hit cometh, in my thoht
 Of this worldes joie, hou hit goth al to noht.

A lovesong in which the poet celebrates the graces of his lady fair has this fine refrain:

Blou, northerne wynd
 Send thou me my suetyng (sweeting)
 Blou, northerne wynd! blou, blou, blou!

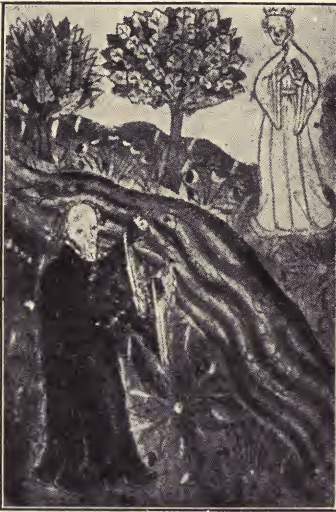
31. Religious Lyrics. There are nearly two hundred lyrics of a religious character that have been preserved from the three centuries following the Norman Conquest. Among them are *On Ureisun of oure Louerde* (*A Prayer of our Lord*) and *The Wohunge of ure Lauerd* (*The Wooing of our Lord*) which are supposed to be the work of a woman — possibly one of the three sisters of Dorsetshire for whom the *Ancren Riwe* was written. Undoubtedly the most beautiful of the religious poems is the *Love Rune* by Thomas de Hales, written about 1275 at the request of a maid of Christ who asked him to write a love-song, so that she might learn to choose a worthy lover. The poet sings of the vanity of all earthly things and shows how fleeting and inconstant worldly love is. He asks

Hwer is Paris and Heleyne
 That weren so bryht and feyre on bleo (complexion)
 Amadas, Tristram, and Dideyne
 Yseude (Iseult) and alle theo:
 Ector (Hector) with his scharpe meyne
 And Cesar riche of worldes feo? (wealth)
 Heo (they) beoth iglyden ut of the reyne
 So the schef is of e cleo. (like corn from the hillside)

He tells her of a greater Lover to whom all earthly rulers are vassals — a Lover whose abode is fairer than Solomon's

temple of precious stone. That is the Lover for her to choose if she would know eternal happiness. The poem reveals a spirit of devout and passionate yearning.

32. The Pearl. The gem among lyrical-narrative poems of the fourteenth century is unquestionably *The Pearl*, a work of elaborate artistic grace and possessing imaginative quality of the highest character. The unknown author



From an Old Manuscript

The Pearl

who wrote this lovely poem about 1370 to express his emotion over the death of his little daughter Margaret (the name means *pearl* in Latin) chose a complicated twelve-line stanza and extended his narrative to 101 stanzas. The story is an allegory that is not hard to follow. The poet, having lost his beautiful pearl without compeer and having sought for it in vain, lies down heart-broken in the open field and, lulled by the odor of the flowers, falls asleep. In a vision he finds himself in a land glorious beyond expression; a realm

of shimmering brightness where birds of brilliant plumage sing rapturous melodies. Traversing a fair forest, he reaches a shining stream with precious gems lying like pebbles in its depths. He wanders along the bank, seeking a passage to the paradise on the other side. Then, across the stream, he beholds a crystal cliff and beneath it a gracious maid in dazzling white robes. She raises her face, and as he gazes she seems to be glorified in a halo of jewels. On

her head rests a coronet incrusted with pearls. She advances to the shore and addresses the poet. He asks if she is the pearl that he has lost and mourned. She chides him for his grief and tells him that she has become as a pearl of great price. He seeks to join her, but is told this is impossible until he leaves behind his body of cold clay. While he beholds her his sorrow wanes and he asks her to tell him of her present joys. She describes to him the glories of the City of God. When the poet expresses a desire to see the place, she tells him he may see the outer form, but only the pure in heart may enter. He then proceeds until he beholds on the opposite hill a fair burg of burnished gold with gates of pearl. Through the walls he beholds the city flooded with light and in the midst is the throne of God. At the portal is the procession of those who, decked with pearls, are permitted to know Heaven's bliss. Among the thousands who are making their way to the Throne of Grace is his own dear Margaret, bearing her pearl on her breast. The poet is about to plunge into the stream to reach her when he awakens and laments to find himself in the world — alone. Yet, if his dear Pearl is blessed as he has dreamed, then all is well and he commends his precious jewel to God's care.

This poem is indeed one of the fairest expressions of medieval literature. The work of a sincere and devout singer, it apparently commemorates the actual loss of a little child, bringing such deep grief to the poet's heart. Several attempts have been made to modernize the poem, so that its lovely qualities might become known to those who would not be able to read it in the original form.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

1. **A Literary Awakening.** During the half-century 1350–1400, in which the English language superseded the French language in England, there was a great outburst of national pride over the successful course of the war against France. The union of the Saxon and the Norman elements in the English character was virtually complete. The decisive victories at Cressy (1346) and at Poitiers (1356) mark the waning importance of the knight in full armor. With the passing of feudalism came the dawn of a new era, characterized by growing discontent over the insolence of the ruling classes and the corruption of the clergy. As a result of the scarcity of labor after the Black Death (1348) there was a social upheaval that culminated in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. The period in which Chaucer and his contemporaries wrote was one of widespread, startling developments, and the literature of the age did not fail to reflect those significant changes.

2. **Development of the English Language.** After Edward III in 1362 gave official recognition to English as the language of his court, of Parliament, and of the courts of law, there was a rapid enriching of the vocabulary, mainly from French sources. The language attained greater flexibility and power in the hands of the capable writers who now used it for literary expression. In the East Midland dialect that prevailed in the vicinity of London the language achieved a form quite similar to modern English in many respects. Some of Chaucer's contemporaries used other dialects,

but it was largely due to the use of East Midland by Chaucer himself that this dialect became the accepted national tongue.

3. Mandeville's Travels. Among the most popular books produced during the age of Chaucer was the remarkable volume that purported to be the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, Knight. Three hundred manuscripts have survived, and before the year 1500 it had been printed in German, Dutch, Italian, Latin, and English. Since that time the *Travels* have been translated into nearly every language of Europe. According to his own story, Sir John was born at St. Albans and started on his travels in 1322. He visited eastern Europe, Africa, the Holy Land, Tartary, India, and the isles of the Orient, spending thirty-four years abroad. In the course of his wanderings he saw many strange sights. He visited a land where hens had wool instead of feathers; another where ants grew as large as hounds; another where huge snails had shells so large that many persons might lodge in them. Among the remarkable people that he met was a tribe of cannibals that had dogs' heads; another tribe that had but one eye in the middle of the forehead; others had no heads, but had eyes in their shoulders; others had eight toes on each foot; still others had ears hanging down to their knees. Among the most ingenious was an Ethiopian tribe that had only one leg with a broad, flat foot on which to hop about. When they would lie down to sleep in the sun they could raise their leg and use the foot as a sunshade. Mandeville also spoke of the pygmies, who were but three spans high, married when they were six months old, and died of old age at seven or eight years. He wandered far afield, but when he approached the region of Paradise, he wrote modestly: "Of Paradise I cannot speak properly, for I was not there."

We must not regard the *Travels* as a mere tissue of nonsense and outrageous statements. There is much quaint

information in the midst of many absurdities. There is a detailed account of incubation as practiced in Egypt and a description of the cotton plant. Mandeville also insisted, more than a century before Columbus, that the earth was round, gave a very plausible explanation to prove his contention, and estimated the circumference of the globe as over twenty thousand miles.

Scholars for many generations regarded Mandeville as a prince among liars, but he turns out to be even a greater liar than any one suspected, because we now know that he never existed. Some clever compiler made up the original narrative of the *Travels* in French about 1356 from all sorts of available sources. He drew from the experiences of actual travelers in the Orient and from his imagination whenever the narrative threatened to become dull. He told everything in a convincing, straightforward manner and frequently regretted that he had not proof at hand to verify some of his more incredible statements. The unknown author, whoever he was, deserves credit for carrying out his hoax so successfully, but it is too bad that we have to drop Sir John Mandeville, Knight, from our list of good fellows who helped to make life more entertaining for his own age and for posterity.

4. **John Wycliffe (1324-1384).** The first great name in the history of the English Reformation is that of Wycliffe, who is sometimes called "the morning-star of the Reformation." His fame is associated with the first complete translation of the Bible into English, although much of the work was done by others under his direction. Wycliffe was born near Richmond, in Yorkshire, about 1324, and educated at Balliol College, Oxford. He is said to have been Master of that famous college in 1361. He held various benefices and became a doctor of divinity. During his later years he was vicar at Lutterworth in Leicestershire, where he died in 1384. His life must have been a very busy one, for

in addition to his pastoral duties he found time to write many theological works in English and in Latin. His *Sermons* alone fill two large volumes. In his controversial writings he attacked the corrupt clergy of his day and insisted that they should be exposed to the contempt of all who had the interest of the Church at heart. The Bible translation, however, is his most important literary work and had a widespread influence upon the English prose of the age. The Early Version of his Bible was probably completed about 1382, two years before his death. The New Testament is the best part of that translation and is generally accepted as Wycliffe's own work. The Later Version, which was prepared several years after his death, was supervised by one of his faithful followers and is a far better translation of Holy Writ. Its popularity is proved by the fact that over a hundred and fifty manuscript copies have survived to our day.



John Wycliffe

5. Piers Plowman. One of the very important medieval poems belonging to the class called "vision-literature" is *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman*. It is written in unrhymed, long alliterative lines that were well out of fashion in the fourteenth century, and in this respect the poem harks back to an earlier literary period, but in spirit it was quite abreast of the times and deserves to rank as the greatest piece of medieval English literature with the sole exception of *The Canterbury Tales*. The poem opens with a prologue in which the poet is represented as falling asleep on a May morning at a brookside near the Malvern hills:

In a somer seson whan soft was the sonne
 I shope me in shroudes as I a shepe were
 In habite as an heremite unholy of workes
 Went wyde in this world wondres to here
 Ac on a *May mornynge* on *Maluerne hilles*
 Me byfel a ferly of fairy me thoughte
 I was very forwandred and wente me to reste
 Under a brode bank bi a bornes side
 And as I lay and lened and loked in the wateres
 I slombred in a slepyng it sweyved so merye.

The vision that rolls like a panorama before the poet reveals a fair town on a hill, a dungeon in the valley below, and between them is a "fair field full of folk" — a great multitude representing the varied life on this earth. All classes and conditions of mankind are represented, spend-thrifts and plowmen, merchants and beggars, hermits and jesters — in short, rich and poor, workers and idlers, just as we find people in the world to-day. A lovely lady, who personifies Holy Church, appears and tells the poet that the high tower is the Tower of Truth, the abode of the Creator, while the dungeon is the Castle of Care, where dwells the Father of Falseness. Holy Church points out to him the figures of Falsehood and Flattery in the throng of folk, and likewise Lady Meed (or Bribery) who is responsible for much evil. Lady Meed is afterwards brought to trial before the King on account of her misdeeds. At the King's request, Reason comes to the trial, accompanied by Wit and Wisdom. An adherent of Lady Meed named Wrong succeeds in winning Wit and Wisdom to her cause by giving them presents, but Reason remains true and acts with strict justice. The King is convinced of Lady Meed's guilt and asks Reason to remain with him for all time.

In a second vision the poet again beholds the "fair field full of folk" with Reason preaching to the multitude. Many are so conscience-stricken by his sermon that they repent and confess their sins. Then follows the confession of

those who represent the Seven Deadly Sins. All the penitents set out to seek the Tower of Truth, but no one knows the way. Thereupon Piers the Plowman makes himself known and offers to act as their guide, but not until he has plowed his half-acre. He commends honest toil to the knights and ladies as the best preparation for their final salvation. Several shirk their tasks, but Hunger brings them to subjection by his sharp treatment. The third part of the poem is sometimes called *The Search for Dowel, Dobet, Dobest* (or Do Well, Do Better, and Do Best). In this part we find a curious prophecy forecasting the breaking-up of the religious orders and a fervent appeal for the conversion of the Mohammedans. The vision concludes with a despairing conviction on the part of the weeping dreamer that much remains to be done to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

No summary can possibly indicate the wealth of material and imaginative quality to be found in this remarkable allegory. Some critics regard *Piers Plowman* as second only to Dante's *Divine Comedy* among poetical allegories of the world's literature. The poem has come down to us in three forms, which for convenience are called the A-text, the B-text, and the C-text. The A-text, which belongs to about the year 1362, has 2567 verses and includes only the earlier parts of the Vision; the B-text, dating from about 1376-1377, has 3206 lines for the parts covered by the A-text, and adds the third part of the Vision, bringing the total length to 7242 lines; the C-text, dating 1393-1398, is a revision of the B-text, with many changes, including omissions as well as additions, giving a total of 7357 lines. For many years it was believed that a certain William Langland (born 1322?) was the author of *Piers Plowman*, or at least of the early version of the poem, but that view has been much questioned of late, and scholars have not arrived at a decision. Very little is known concerning Langland, and that little does

not offer much evidence on which to credit him with the glory of having given this noble allegory to our literature.

6. **John Gower (1325 ? –1408).** Probably the most learned poet of the age was John Gower, who was born in Kent about 1325. We know nothing of his youth or education, but he appears to have been a man of considerable means. He was apparently well acquainted with Chaucer and during the last years of his life suffered from failing eye-sight. In spite of his great learning, Gower was unable to determine whether French, Latin, or English would be the best language in which to write his poems. Unlike Chaucer, who wisely decided in favor of English, Gower took what seemed the safest course by writing one long poem in each of the three languages. His *Speculum Meditantis* (or *Miroir de l'homme*) is a lengthy poem of 28,603 verses written in French and dealing with human virtues and vices. His second poem, *Vox Clamantis*, is in Latin, and is a dream-allegory of 10,265 lines lamenting the corruptions and evil conditions of his age. His third and most important work, *Confessio Amantis*, was written about 1390 in English and is the longest of his poems, extending to a total of 34,000 lines. There is only one manuscript surviving of Gower's French poem, and ten manuscripts of the Latin poem, but the forty-three manuscripts of *Confessio Amantis* prove that Gower's last choice of a language was the best.

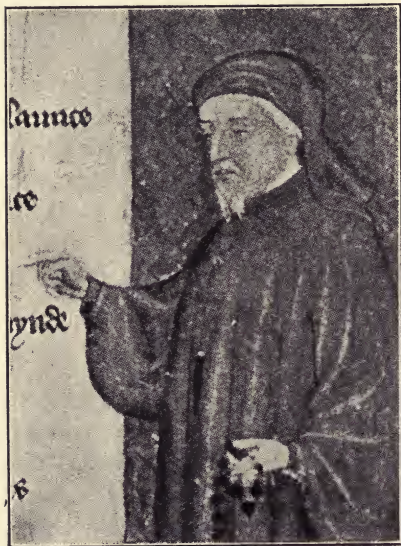
Confessio Amantis (or *Confession of a Lover*) is a collection of one hundred and twelve short stories, apparently written at the request of Richard II. Like so many of his predecessors, Gower selected stories to illustrate the Seven Deadly Sins, which were a favorite subject throughout the Middle Ages. Unlike *Handlyng Synne*, however, in which the chief purpose was to point a moral, *Confessio Amantis* was frankly intended to entertain as well as to instruct. Most of the tales had to do with love, and were drawn from such sources as Ovid, the Bible, Josephus, and the metrical

romances. Although there is a general disposition nowadays to regard Gower's work as tedious and negligible, such criticism is not quite fair. *Confessio Amantis* was very popular in its day and was frequently translated. Caxton printed it in 1483. Ben Jonson praised Gower for his excellent English; Shakespeare introduced him as the Prologue for the play of *Pericles*, the plot of which was taken from the *Confessio*. Gower's reputation suffered in later days because of the superior genius of his great contemporary Chaucer, but to judge any medieval writer by such a standard is unreasonable, because Chaucer was so evidently in advance of his age. Gower's verse is smooth and regular, he exhibits good judgment in the proportion of his plan, and he tells his stories in simple, picturesque language. Undoubtedly he would rank higher in our esteem to-day if it were not for the overshadowing figure of the greatest poet of that age — the first really distinguished writer in the history of our literature.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340–1400)

7. Chaucer's Life. Although the date of Chaucer's birth has not been definitely learned, it is generally accepted that he was born in London in 1340. His father was John Chaucer, a vintner, or wine-merchant. During his youth Chaucer served as a page in the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, who was Edward III's daughter-in-law. Records show that she presented Chaucer with clothing when he was seventeen and allowed him twenty shillings for his Christmas expenses. The Countess was a half-sister of John of Gaunt, and it is likely that Chaucer soon made the acquaintance of that powerful prince. In 1359 Chaucer joined the English forces in France and was taken prisoner near Rheims. Edward III contributed £16 (equivalent to £240 to-day) toward the youth's ransom. He returned to England with the King and after the death

of the Countess of Ulster became a member of the King's household. In 1366 he appears to have married a woman named Philippa, but the evidence is uncertain. At the age of twenty-eight he ranked high in the list of royal esquires. He was sent repeatedly to the Continent on important diplomatic missions and enjoyed a liberal pension from the King. On two occasions he went to Italy, visiting Florence



Geoffrey Chaucer

as well as Genoa, and possibly on one of those trips he made the acquaintance of the famous Italian poet Petrarch, who was then living near Padua. By 1374 Chaucer was a man of such importance that he enjoyed not only the King's pension, but another of £10 from John of Gaunt and a royal grant of a pitcher of wine daily. In that year he was appointed controller of customs for London and thus assumed important

business responsibilities. The death of Edward III in 1377 did not interrupt Chaucer's prosperity. He enjoyed the confidence of Richard II and rose rapidly in the new King's esteem. In 1385 he became Justice of the Peace for Kent and a year later sat in Parliament. About this time, however, a change occurred in his fortunes as a result of a political upheaval that deprived John of Gaunt of his influence. After Gaunt's return to England in 1389

Chaucer's circumstances improved; he was made Clerk of the King's Works and enjoyed important commissions while he held that post. During his later years he was again in financial straits, possibly because his pension was not paid regularly. Creditors began to bring suits against him and he had to appeal to the King for aid. Richard II granted him £10 and a hogshead of wine annually for life. When Richard died in 1399, Chaucer promptly applied to the new King, Henry IV, for consideration. Henry granted him forty marks (now £400) a year, in addition to the grants made by Richard II. Chaucer was thus assured of ending his days in comfort. Within a few months after receiving the latest evidences of royal favor, he leased a property in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster, for as many of fifty-three years as he should live. He died, however, on October 25, 1400, just ten months after he took possession of his new home. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, being the first of the many distinguished literary men who have been laid to rest in the now famous Poets' Corner of the Abbey.

8. Chaucer's Literary Work. It is customary to divide the literary work of Chaucer into three periods: (1) the French period, in which he wrote *The Romaunt of the Rose*, *The Dethe of Blanche the Duchesse*, and shorter pieces; (2) the Italian period, to which belong *The Parlement of Foules*, *The Hous of Fame*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Legende of Good Women*, and a prose translation of Boethius; (3) the English period, in which he produced most of the stories that are included in his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, as well as a prose work, his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. In all three periods he wrote numerous minor poems which must be passed over without mention.

9. The French Period. Chaucer's first ambitious literary undertaking was *The Romaunt of the Rose*, which is a translation (7698 lines) of about one-third of the famous French

poem, *Roman de la Rose*, a dream-vision allegory of the thirteenth century. It is likely that Chaucer grew tired



Painting by F. M. Brown

Chaucer Reading to Edward III

of his task before completing it and gave up the translation to proceed with original work; yet the influence of *Roman de la Rose* is evident in all his later work. There is some

doubt as to whether the text of *The Romaunt of the Rose* as we have it to-day is really Chaucer's translation. His first extensive original poem, *The Dethe of Blanche the Duchesse*, or *The Boke of the Duchesse*, as it is also called, is a dream-poem (1334 lines) in which Chaucer laments the death of Blanche, wife of his loyal patron, John of Gaunt. In a vision the poet finds himself in a hunting party that is traversing a wood. They come across a man in black who is greatly dejected and who, after some inquiry, tells them at length of the loss of his dear lady. Her beauty and worth are recounted, together with details of their courtship. This poem is somewhat tedious in parts and lacks proportion; at the same time it reveals the graceful manner and much of the charm that pervade his later work.

10. The Italian Period. There was a notable improvement in Chaucer's work after he had come under the influence of Italian literature on his repeated visits to the Continent in the King's service. In *The Parlement of Foules* (699 lines) we have another vision-story, which was derived in part from *Teseide*, by the Italian writer Boccaccio. In his dream the poet saw the goddess Nature surrounded by birds of every kind that were assembled on St. Valentine's Day to choose their mates. Three male eagles pleaded as suitors for a lovely female eagle, but it was impossible to choose among them. The other birds protested at the delay. Nature bade them to decide upon a mate for the fair eagle by election, but they could not agree. Nature then declared that the eagle should choose her own mate, allowing her a year in which to decide. The other birds were then mated and sang in praise of Nature, awakening the poet with their song. The poem has usually been accepted as a delicate compliment to Richard II and his Queen, Anne of Bohemia, who had been wooed by three suitors.

The Hous of Fame is an incomplete poem of 2158 lines based on an idea taken from the Latin poet Ovid. Once

again the popular device of the dream-vision was employed. The poet found himself in a temple of glass dedicated to Venus. A huge eagle descended from the heavens and bore him away to the House of Fame, which stood on a hill of ice. The names engraved on the sunny side of the palace were melting away, but those on the northern side were intact. In the hall sat Lady Fame, who decided upon the award of all who claimed renown. As the poem ends abruptly it is difficult to give a full explanation of the allegory.

Troilus and Criseyde represents Chaucer's contribution to the Troy cycle. The story is not found in Homer, but is of medieval origin, occurring first in a French *Roman de Troie*. Boccaccio made it into an Italian poem under the title *Filostrato*. Chaucer took the plot directly from Boccaccio, producing a poem of 8239 lines — his most extensive poem and next in importance to *The Canterbury Tales*. The story became popular in spite of the fact that Troilus is not an admirable hero and that Criseyde proves to be an unfaithful heroine. It is interesting to note that Shakespeare used the same story for one of his less familiar tragedies, *Troilus and Cressida*.

The Legende of Good Women, like *The Hous of Fame*, is an unfinished poem. Besides the Prologue there are ten legends of such women as Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Medea, and Lucretia, who were ready to sacrifice everything for love. This fragment of 2723 lines was drawn from Boccaccio as well as from Ovid, Virgil, and other classical sources.

Chaucer's important prose work of this period is his translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, the same work that King Alfred had rendered into Old English. Another prose work of later date, his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, is of interest mainly because of its charming prologue addressed to "Litel Lowis, my sone," who was of the "tendre age of ten yer" at the time the father was explaining the

use of the astrolabe for his benefit. Nothing definite is known concerning Lewis Chaucer.

11. The Canterbury

Tales. In the third or English period Chaucer's genius reached its height in the series of stories known as *The Canterbury Tales*. From Boccaccio he may have borrowed the idea of securing a suitable framework for a large group of stories that would otherwise have had little connection with each



Canterbury Cathedral

other. Boccaccio in his *Decameron* represented a party of noble lords and ladies in Florence going into seclusion during a plague and entertaining themselves by telling a series of one hundred tales in ten days. Chaucer's plan was quite different from that of the *Decameron*, but equally ingenious. In his day it was customary to make pilgrimages to the shrine of Thomas à Becket in Canterbury. The great archbishop had been murdered in 1170 at the altar of the cathedral and had been proclaimed a martyr and a saint. Miracles were said to be wrought at his tomb and persons of all classes made their way thither. In spring many pilgrims followed the road from London to Canterbury. To protect themselves from highwaymen, as well as to relieve the monotony of what was usually a three or four days' journey, they often traveled in large parties and told stories on the way to pass the time more pleasantly.

12. The Prologue. In his *Prologue* Chaucer represents a group of thirty such pilgrims assembling one April day

at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, across the Thames from London. It was a merry party, representing almost every social order of the day. There was the Knight — a splendid figure and a gallant fighter; his son, the Squire, arrayed in gayly-colored garments, a medieval dandy; the Yeoman, with cropped head and green coat, bearing his sharp arrows at his belt; the modest Prioress, neatly attired and very decorous in her behavior; the bald Monk, ponderous of



Painting by Stothard

The Canterbury Pilgrims

body and fond of good living; the dignified Merchant with his forked beard and rich robes; the poor, ascetic Clerk (or Scholar) of Oxford, riding in threadbare garb on a sorry steed lean as a rake; the prosperous and portly Wife of Bath, who had fared widely and knew much of life; the sincerely devout Parson, who labored zealously for his flock and set them a good example by following his own precepts; the burly, thickset Miller who could knock doors off their hinges by running headlong into them; the flaxen-haired, thin-voiced Pardoner with his wallet of saintly relics — but we cannot name them all. No summary can do

justice to the vivid portrayal of personality, the close attention to dress or general appearance, the shrewd humor or satiric shaft at traits not unfamiliar in human conduct of our own day. Chaucer's account of the Canterbury pilgrims is accepted by critics of every stamp as one of the finest pieces of descriptive verse in all literature. The *Prologue* must be read in full if we wish to enjoy the genius of Chaucer at its very best.



The Canterbury Pilgrims

13. The Plan of the Pilgrimage. This varied company brought joy to the heart of Harry Bailey, mine Host of the Tabard Inn, who was evidently pleased to have this large and interesting party as his guests. It was he who proposed that they should start out together for Canterbury in the morning and that each member of the party should tell four tales — two on the way to Canterbury and two on the return journey. He would join them and act as judge and reporter of their tales. The pilgrim who told the best story was to have a supper at the Tabard Inn at the expense of the others.

As the party was to comprise thirty-one persons including the poet, but excluding Bailey, Chaucer's scheme called for 124 stories, but the work was far from complete at the time of his death. It is evident that Chaucer changed his plan while working on the tales. He permitted a Canon and his Yeoman to join the party while on their way to Canterbury, and let the Yeoman tell one of the tales. There



The Tabard Inn

is reason to believe that Chaucer found his original plan too ambitious and decided to have each pilgrim tell only one story each way. Still later he apparently gave up the idea of the return journey and also of an epilogue describing the supper at the

Tabard Inn. At any rate, the collection as we have it includes only twenty-four stories and three of these were left unfinished. Twenty-two of the stories are in verse and two in prose.

14. The Tales. It is impossible to dwell upon more than a few of the stories that make up this fine collection. *The Knight's Tale*, which came first, is the longest and is universally regarded as the best. It tells of two noble Theban cousins, Palamon and Arcite, who are held prisoners in Athens, where both fall in love with the princess Emilia and become the bitterest of enemies because of that rivalry. Their subsequent adventures, leading up to the great tournament decreed by Theseus to decide which of the knights is to win the fair Emilia, make one of the finest romantic stories in existence. The same story (which was taken from Boccaccio's *Teseide*) furnished the plot for the Eliza-

bethan play, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which Shakespeare may have had a hand; it was also very effectively modernized by Dryden under the title *Palamon and Arcite*.

The dainty Prioress tells the pathetic tale of young Hugh of Lincoln, the seven-year old chorister who rejoiced in singing the Latin hymn *O Alma Redemptoris Mater* in honor of the Virgin, and who was cruelly murdered and cast into a pit. When his distracted mother began to search for her little boy, those who had done him to death denied all knowledge of him, but from the pit the dead child sang the hymn that it loved so well and thus revealed their crime. The Nun's Priest tells the pleasant story of Chanticleer and the Fox. In the barn-yard of a poor widow proud Chanticleer is monarch of all he surveys. He is distressed by dreams of a strange creature that wishes him harm. Eventually the Fox comes along and by crafty flattery manages to seize Chanticleer and makes off with him, but in the end the cock proves even more cunning and succeeds in escaping from his enemy.



Painting by Burne-Jones

The Prioress' Tale

The Pardoner tells one of the most powerful of all the tales. It is an Oriental legend of three young revelers who are misspending their lives and who in plague-time start on a drunken quest for Death, who has carried off one of their number. They meet an old man, who directs them to a tree, under which they will find the object of their search. There they find a pile of gold. One of the trio goes to an inn to fetch wine, so that the party may celebrate their discovery, but hoping to get all the gold for himself, he poisons the wine on his way back. The other two, meanwhile, have plotted his destruction. When he returns they murder him, drink the wine, and die themselves. The Wife of Bath, having been five times married, gives an amiable account of her various husbands in a diverting prologue before she proceeds to tell the popular story of the Knight and the Loathsome Lady — a tale that appears in almost every literature from India to Iceland, and was one of the best related in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. In King Arthur's days a knight who had been condemned for his misdeeds was told by the Queen that if, after a search for a year and a day, he could tell her what women most desire, his life would be spared. He sought in vain until an aged crone appeared and promised to tell him the secret, provided he would marry her. The knight agreed and on the appointed day was able to give the right answer: women desire sovereignty over their husbands. The hideous crone then claimed him for her husband and tried to convince him that it was better to have an old and ugly wife. "Would you rather have me old and hideous, but faithful, or would you have me young and fair, though possibly faithless?" she said. "Choose for yourself," replied the knight. "I trust in your good judgment." This answer assured her that she had won mastery over her husband. As he kissed her she was transformed into a young and lovely maiden.

As a rebuke to the Wife of Bath, whose ideal of wedded happiness is for the wife to dominate the home, the Clerk of Oxford tells the appealing story of Griselda — a tale that occurs in Boccaccio and elsewhere in literature. Walter, the Marquis of the Saluces, has wedded Griselda, the daughter of the poorest of his subjects, a girl of noble character who swore never in deed or thought to disobey her husband. After a little daughter is born Walter determines to test his wife's patience by removing the child and telling Griselda that the baby was slain. Six years later her little two-year old boy is similarly taken away, but she does not complain. When their daughter is twelve years old, Walter sends forged documents of divorce to Griselda and announces that he will wed another wife. Griselda patiently prepares the home for her successor. Walter is now assured of her virtues. The pretended bride is introduced and turns out to be her beloved daughter. The boy is restored and all live happily thereafter.

What promised to be one of the finest of the tales is that of the Squire, but unfortunately it is a fragment. The romance reflects the spirit of the *Arabian Nights* and similar literature. Cambyuskan, King of Tartary, has two sons and a lovely daughter Canacee. On the King's birthday a knight brings strange gifts from the King of Araby: a steed of brass that will carry its rider through the air to any destination, a mirror that will reveal friend or foe and give warning of evil, a gold ring that will enable the wearer to speak with birds and animals, and a sword that will give a serious wound, curable only if the wound is struck by the flat side of the sword. Next morning Canacee ventures forth, wearing the magic ring. She hears a female falcon tell a pathetic tale of unhappy love and is able to understand. She takes the bird home and cares for it. The fragment ends before we learn anything more of the other remarkable gifts from Araby.

The Parson, evidently convinced that there was too much frivolity about most of the stories told by the other pilgrims, resorts to plain prose and delivers a lengthy discourse on Penitence, with a long-drawn account of the Seven Deadly Sins. There seems to be some ground for the view that Chaucer's revised plan involved the use of the Parson's Tale, dull as it is, for the last of the series.

15. Characteristics of Chaucer. None will question the universal recognition of Chaucer as the greatest artist and the most important figure in English literature up to the time of Spenser and Shakespeare. In him we find for the first time the peer of the French and Italian writers who were enriching their respective literatures. Most conspicuous among his traits is the remarkable talent for description that makes his delineations so clear-cut and unforgettable. His narrative skill was also great in his later work, showing sound judgment of essentials in storytelling. Though he did not undertake to lash the wrongs and abuses of his day with the zeal of an inspired reformer, he did show a hearty contempt for the baser qualities of the characters he drew. Satire and humor were used with excellent effect in reproducing the life of that age. In breadth of view and in his indulgent sympathy with the frailty of well-meaning but misguided creatures, Chaucer anticipated to some extent one great quality that marked the genius of Shakespeare. He knew and delineated with keen insight all phases of the life of his time. Although possessed of extensive general knowledge, Chaucer was not a learned scholar in the narrower sense of the term. He read philosophy and dabbled in astrology and dream-lore. Astronomy and allied mathematical branches were familiar to him. Like the author of Mandeville's *Travels*, he seems to have had some notion of the fact that the earth is round. His verse reveals a degree of smoothness, grace, and variety unknown before his time. To him we owe many new

verse-forms that were either invented or borrowed from continental writers.

As for his limitations, it has been said that Chaucer is the poet of the eye, not of the heart or soul. He was not especially concerned about causes and effects. With unerring skill he depicted persons or things as they were, but he did not attempt to go much further. Even in his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, he claimed only to set down faithfully what he saw and heard, letting the reader form his own judgments. However, Chaucer's work will remain for all time among the honored treasures of our literature for its variety, vivacity, and most of all for its superabundant good humor.

16. Chaucer's Language. Chaucer did not set out deliberately to reform the English language. He took the current dialect of London as he found it and added words from French or Latin when no native equivalent was at hand, but his borrowings from foreign sources are less numerous than is generally supposed. Passage for passage, the intensely English poem of *Piers Plowman* contains a larger proportion of foreign words than Chaucer, in spite of the various foreign influences to which the courtly poet was subjected. By producing so large and important a body of poetic literature in the London (East Midland) dialect, he did much to bring about the dominance of that dialect over all others and in helping it to become ultimately the standard speech of England. Had Chaucer accomplished no more than this, he would fairly have won the right to be considered the first great modern English poet.

CHAPTER IV

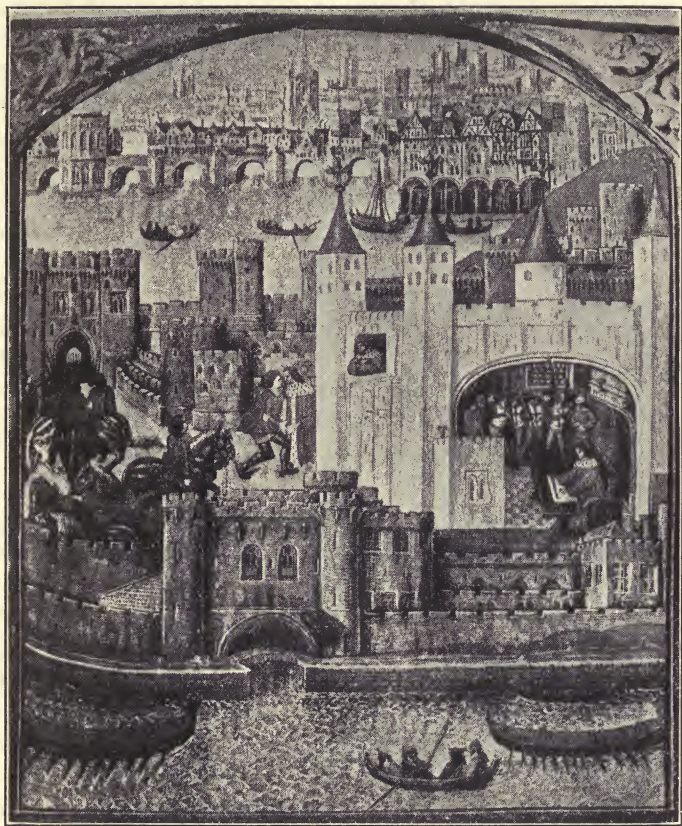
THE RENAISSANCE

1. A Fallow Period. The period between the death of Chaucer and the Age of Elizabeth is singularly lacking in important literary figures. There were no quickening impulses like those of the preceding epoch. In the literary world it was a period of transition, when one series of vitalizing influences gradually dies out and new sources of inspiration begin to make themselves felt quite as gradually. Such an age is rarely characterized by a writer of outstanding significance. Among the English poets of the fifteenth century only two call for special mention. **Thomas Hoccleve** or **Occleve** (1370?–1450?) was the author of a poem called *The Governail of Princes*, which he dedicated to that Prince of Wales who is better known as Prince Hal in the pages of Shakespeare. Not only is the poem a frank imitation of Chaucer, but it reveals Hoccleve's regard for his distinguished predecessor, whom he thus addresses:

O maister dere and fader reverent,
My maister Chaucer! floure of eloquence,
Mirroure of fructuous entendement, (intelligence)
O universal fadir in science.

A poet of far greater merit was **John Lydgate** (1370?–1451?), a Benedictine monk of Bury St. Edmunds, who wrote a great number of poems that have not yet been printed. His long *Troye Book* was inspired by Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. He likewise ventured to add himself to the procession of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, and wrote his *Storie of Thebes* as his contribution to the tales told by that party. *The Falles of Princes* was Lydgate's most popular poem. Among his minor pieces is one entitled

London Lickpenny, which gives a detailed and vivid picture of the London of his day:



Medieval London

Then unto London I dyd me hye
Of all the land it beareth the pryse:
' Hot pescodes,' one began to crye,
' Strabery rype, and cherries in the ryse':
One bad me come nere and by some spyce,
Peper and safforne they gan me bede, (offer)
But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

2. **Scottish Literature.** The best poetry during this period was written in Scotland. **King James I of Scotland** (1394–1437) was a poet who spent part of his life in England as a political prisoner. During the nineteen years of his captivity at Windsor Castle he wrote his poem, *The Kingis*



Painting by Penrose

Lady Jane Beaufort

Quair (*The King's Book*) in which he related the story of his passion for an English maiden, Lady Jane Beaufort, with whom he fell in love in the same manner as Arcite, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, first beheld and loved the fair Emily. Somewhat later Robert Henryson (1430?–1506?), a teacher in Dumferline, wrote his *Testament of Creseide*, in which he undertook to complete Chaucer's story of the Trojan heroine. He was more successful, however, in his *Fables*, which are full of imaginative quality and good humor.

William Dunbar (1460?–1520?) is usually considered the best of the Scottish poets. He was attached to the court of James IV and went to London in 1501 with the ambassadors who arranged for the marriage between King James and the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII.. His poem, *The Thistle and the Rose*, was written in honor of that

royal marriage. Like the work of James I, it revealed the poet's great obligation to Chaucer, whom he imitated freely. Among his other works are *The Merle and the Nightingale* and *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*. Gawain Douglas (1474?–1522) wrote poetry in his early years, but later became interested in politics. Besides translating Virgil's *Aeneid* into English for the first time, he wrote two interesting allegories, *The Palice of Honour* and *King Hart*. In the work of these poets we find a love of nature that was generally lacking in the writers who dwelt south of the Tweed.

3. The English Ballads. While the successors of Chaucer were trying in vain to rival the work of their master, there developed in England a type of popular ballad that acquired a form distinctly its own. These songs, for they really were intended to be sung, may be regarded as folk-poetry, because they are nearly always of composite origin, not the work of a single writer. No matter who was responsible for the first version, a ballad would be altered, extended, or cut according to the fancy of the singer. Thus they were handed on from one generation to another. In some cases ballads have survived in widely different versions. For the most part they are quaint in wording and with a homely rhythm that must have appealed to the common people. The prevailing ballad stanza has four lines, in which the first and third lines, which may be rhymed or unrhymed, have four accents, while the second and fourth lines, which are rhymed, have three accents. Thus the opening stanza of *Sir Patrick Spens*:

The King sits in Dumferline tounne
Drinking the blude-red wine,
'O whar will I get a guid sailor
To sail this ship of mine?'

A great many subjects were treated in ballad form. One group related the details of glorious battles, such as the

famous *Chevy Chase*, celebrating the battle of Otterburn (1388) between Earl Percy and Earl Douglas, of which Sir Philip Sidney said it moved his heart more than a trumpet. Others dealt with romantic love stories, happy or unhappy, such as *The Douglas Tragedy* and *The Twa Corbies*. Many ballads told of spirited adventure in the greenwood, such as *Adam Bell*, *Clym of the Clough*, and *William of Cloudsley*. Another group introduced ghosts or similar apparitions, as in *Fair Margaret and Sweet William* and *The Wife of Usher's Well*, where the ghosts of three drowned men appear at the home of their grieving mother. Some related historical or legendary events, as *Sir Patrick Spens* or *St. Stephen and Herod*. Among domestic ballads we find *The Cruel Brother*, and also *The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington*, which tells a pretty story of a youth's devotion for seven long years to a disdainful sweetheart and how his love was at last rewarded.

The most famous series included those dealing with Robin Hood and his band of merry men in Sherwood Forest. In Robin we have an idealized outlaw, surrounded by a band of boon companions like Little John, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlett, and Allan-a-Dale. These all take delight in robbing the rich, helping the poor, and playing clever tricks on the proud sheriff of Nottingham. Our sympathies are usually with the lawbreakers, not with the representatives of the law. We rejoice when Robin Hood rescues the widow's three sons who were condemned to die in Nottingham town for no worse offense than slaying the king's fallow deer; we delight in the outcome of Robin's contest in archery with Guy of Gisborne; we grieve at the end of Robin's career, when the brave outlaw is treacherously permitted to bleed to death by the prioress of Kirkley Hall. Robin Hood is an interesting figure in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, where he appears under the name of Locksley.

Perhaps the most poetic of the ballads is *The Nut-Browne*

Mayde, which is really a dialogue between a maid and her sweetheart. The knight tells her that he has been banished and must flee to the greenwood. When she insists upon accompanying him, he describes the rigors of the outlaw's life and urges her to stay behind. Finding that she insists upon sharing his sorrow as well as his joy, he admits that he was not banished after all, but that he was trying her constancy and is happy because she stood the test so well. He then reveals the fact that he is an earl's son, and both are supremely happy. While most of the ballads are crude in form, *The Nut-Browne Mayde* is a work of considerable literary art and holds high rank among the poems of that period.

4. *Morte d'Arthur*. The most important prose work of the fifteenth century was *Morte d'Arthur* (*Death of Arthur*) written about 1470 by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight. We know little about Malory himself, save that he was a gentleman of an ancient house and a soldier, but we are everlastingly indebted to him for having collected the numerous stories that developed about the heroic King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Few of the older versions of Arthurian stories are as well told as Malory's, and many writers of later ages who sought to improve upon him have made a less favorable impression. No other book of any age expresses so completely the spirit of medieval romance as does *Morte d'Arthur*. Not only have our greatest modern poets turned to Malory for their inspiration, but even the general reader still finds in *Morte d'Arthur* a treasure-trove of courtly adventure. Those who are familiar with Tennyson's description of the death of Elaine in *Lancelot and Elaine* will find the following extract from Malory most interesting:

And thenne she called her fader Sire Bernard and her brother Sir Tyrre, and hertely she praid her fader that her brother myght wryte a letter lyke as she did endyte hit; and so her

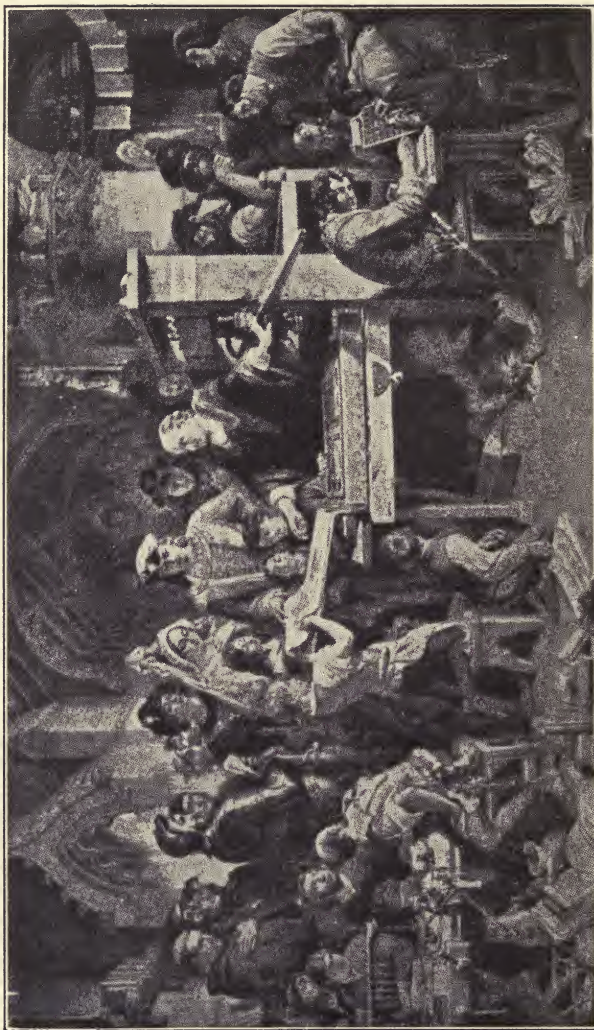
fader graunted her. And whan the letter was wryten word by word lyke as she devysed, thenne she prayd her fader that she myght be watched untyl she were dede. "And whyle my body is hote, lete this letter be putt in my ryght hand, and my hande bounde fast with the letter untyl that I be cold, and lete me be putte in a fayre bedde with alle the rychest clothes that I have aboute me, and so lete my bedde and alle my rychest clothes be laide with me in a charyot unto the next place where Temse is, and there lete me be putte within a barget, and but one man with me, suche as ye trust to stere me thyder, and that my barget be coverd with blak samyte over and over. Thus, fader, I byseche yow lete hit be done." Soo her fader graunted hit her feythfully, alle thyng shold be done lyke as she devysed. Thenne her fader and her broder made grete dole, for when this was done, anone she dyed. And soo whan she was dede, the corps, and the bedde, alle was ledde the next way unto Temse, and there a man, and the corps, and alle, were put in to Temse, and soo the man styred the barget unto Westmynster, and there he rowed a grete whyle to and fro or ony aspyed hit.

Morte d'Arthur takes rank as the most important work in English between Chaucer and Spenser. It is the one supreme romance of our earlier literature and is still more highly treasured than most of the prose written in the greater days of Queen Elizabeth.

5. The Renaissance. The transition from the medieval world to the modern period was marked by a Revival of Learning, or Renaissance, as it is usually called. It is a mistake to suppose, however, that the scholars of the Middle Ages were ignorant of Greek and Latin. From the days of the Venerable Bede there was in the English monasteries and cathedral schools an uninterrupted procession of learned men who knew their classics well, especially the Latin prose writers. What the Renaissance really implies is a new point of view in the study of the classics — no longer were they regarded as mere records of learning or of the practical wisdom accumulated by the ancient world, but as literature, possessing an interest because they reflected

the ideas of bygone ages with charm and beauty of style. Much stress has been laid upon the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, which caused the scholars to flee to Italy with their precious manuscripts of the classics; but the revival of a sincere regard for ancient learning began in Florence and in other Italian cities long before that event. The fugitive scholars from the East carried their traditions beyond Italy into France and England. Soon the spirit of the New Learning was rife throughout western Europe. Not only in literature, but in art and in architecture the quickening force of the new movement made itself felt. New ideas had been brought home from the Orient by the returning Crusaders. Men of the aristocracy began to take an interest in the work of the scholars and to become patrons of learning. Printing from movable type — an invention developed by Gutenberg at Mainz about 1450 — soon made possible a widespread scattering of knowledge. The wearisome transcription of manuscripts in the monasteries became a thing of the past. Hard upon the introduction of printing came an age of remarkable geographical discovery — the voyages of Columbus and the Cabots across the perilous ocean, and not many years later, the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan. During a period of little over half a century the world made more rapid strides in civilization than during the preceding thousand years.

6. **William Caxton (1422 ?–1491).** At the time of the invention of printing there was living in Flanders—then a very prosperous center of art and commerce—a Kentish merchant named William Caxton. A French collection of stories dealing with the Trojan War fell into his hands, and he translated the work as a *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, which he had printed at Bruges about 1474, thus giving to the Troy romances the honor of being the first printed book in the English language. A few years later Caxton



Painting by MacIse

Caxton Shows his Work to the King

took a printing-press to London and set up his business near Westminster Abbey. From that time onward he was a zealous publisher, winning for himself a name not only as the first English printer, but as a translator with a real appreciation of the niceties of literature. After producing a few smaller books he undertook such printing as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the *Chronicles of England*, Aesop's *Fables*, Virgil's *Aeneid* in paraphrase, and perhaps most significant of all, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in 1485. Besides printing nearly eighty books, he translated twenty-one books into English, mostly French romances that were still very popular. It is curious to note that Caxton did not print any version of the Bible. Some critics have censured him for devoting so much of his time to the translating and printing of what they regarded as frivolous romances, but Caxton performed a real service in making more generally available many of the best stories that were current in the literature of his own and earlier times.

7. William Tyndale (1490 ?–1536). During the century or more that had elapsed since Wycliffe translated the Bible into English, there had been many changes in the language. William Tyndale, a scholar and cleric who had been educated at Oxford and Cambridge, desired to provide a new English version of the Bible for the use of his fellow-countrymen. As he could not safely undertake that work in England, he went to the Continent, carried out his plan, and had his version of the New Testament printed at Antwerp in 1525. In the religious controversy that attended the Reformation, Tyndale was on the Protestant side. The widespread circulation of his English version aroused the active opposition of his enemies. He went into hiding and fled from place to place, meanwhile working on his translation of the Old Testament. Finally he was betrayed and imprisoned for eighteen months. Then he was strangled and his body burned at the stake.

Tyndale's *Bible* was completed by Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, who in 1535 directed the publication of the first printed translation of the complete Bible. A revised form, known as the *Great Bible*, appeared in 1539 and this was used in every parish church in England a few short years after other brave translators had been hounded to death or driven into exile for venturing to render the Scriptures into the English tongue. The famous Geneva Bible



Painting by Harvey

The Chained Bible

of 1560 was the most important of the English Bibles previous to the Authorized Version or King James Bible of 1611.

8. **Sir Thomas More (1478–1535).** Among the many Renaissance scholars who gave distinction to the reign of Henry VIII none was more highly esteemed than Sir Thomas More, who took greater interest in his classical books than in his legal or political affairs. He stood well in the King's favor and was advanced rapidly at court until he had attained the dignity of Lord High Chancellor. In the religious

upheaval of Henry's reign More ventured to oppose the King, and was condemned and executed in 1535. His interest to the student of literature lies mainly in a Latin work named *Utopia*, published at Louvain in 1516 and translated into English by Ralph Robinson in 1551. *Utopia* (meaning *Nowhere* in Greek) gives a picture of an ideal commonwealth, where men have solved the problem of living happily together in a well-ordered social body. The mythical country of Utopia had many institutions in advance of our own and represented an inspired vision of ideal existence tempered by the sound common sense of the learned author. Some of the rational ideas advocated by More became realities in the later history of his country, but there are still others that might be adopted for the lasting benefit of mankind.



Painting by Holbein

Sir Thomas More

9. **Roger Ascham (1515–1568).** One of the later scholars of the Renaissance was Roger Ascham, tutor of the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey and of Queen Elizabeth. Ascham was a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge, and became a fellow at that University. He was an amiable, tactful man, quite as much noted for his personal qualities as for his learning. When Henry VIII returned from a French campaign in 1545, Ascham dedicated to him a treatise entitled *Toxophilus* (a lover of archery) in which he showed the moral and physical advantages of the popular sport of archery and argued in very modern fashion for the advan-

tages of field-sports in general. Ascham not only won the King's favor and a pension of ten pounds by his dedication, but he remained in Henry's good graces till the death of that inconstant monarch, and then held important state positions during the troublesome reigns of Henry's three children, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth. His second treatise, *The Scholemaster* (1570), was published after his death. In it he sought to distinguish between the profitable pursuit of education and mere futile pedantry that gets nowhere; he upheld the classics, especially those of Greece, for their cultural value; he denounced in strong terms the reading of romances and idle stories from continental sources. Ascham is of special interest because, unlike More, Erasmus, and other learned men of that age, he preferred to write his treatises in English instead of Latin. He deserves credit for being among the first to accept his mother-tongue as a suitable medium for works of a scholarly character.

10. Italian Influences: Wyatt and Surrey. Not all the literature produced in the reign of Henry VIII and his immediate successors was in prose. A new group of courtly poets had arisen and their effusions were circulated in manuscript for the benefit of their friends. Some of these poets had traveled on the Continent, especially in Italy, and had brought back new metrical graces to adorn their efforts in English verse. Notable among the well-born poets were Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503?–1542) and the Earl of Surrey (1517?–1547). Although neither of them wrote very significant poetry, each won the renown of introducing a distinctive verse-form that became popular with later poets. Wyatt introduced the sonnet, which was so admirably used in after times by Milton, Wordsworth, and Rossetti, as well as by Shakespeare in a modified form. It is not difficult to recognize a sonnet, as it always has fourteen lines of five accented (iambic pentameter) verse. There are two parts — the *octave*, or first eight lines, which rhyme a b b a a b b a,

and the *sestet*, or last six lines, which usually rhyme c d c d c d or c d e c d e, although various other combinations are possible. The following sonnet by Wyatt will serve to show the Italian model:

THE LOVER'S LIFE COMPARED TO THE ALPS

Like unto these unmeasurable mountains
 So is my painful life, the burden of ire;
 For high be they, and high is my desire;
 And I of tears and they be full of fountains:
 Under craggy rocks they have barren plains;
 Hard thought in me my woful mind doth tire:
 Small fruit and many leaves their tops do attire:
 With small effect great trust in me remains:
 The boisterous winds oft their high boughs do blast;
 Hot sighs in me continually be shed:
 Wild beasts in them, fierce love in me is fed;
 Unmovable am I, and they steadfast.
 Of singing birds they have the tune and note;
 And I always plaints passing through my throat.

The Earl of Surrey was the first poet to use blank verse in English. He rendered a part of Virgil's *Aeneid* into English, using a form that was later generally adopted by the Elizabethan dramatists and especially glorified in the work of Shakespeare. While Surrey's blank verse (or unrhymed iambic lines of five accents) lacked the distinction that it afterwards achieved at the hands of other writers, its quality may be determined from this specimen describing the departure of Aeneas from Carthage:

Aeneas of this sudden vision
 Adread, starts up out of his sleep in haste,
 Calls up his feres (comrades): "Awake, get up, my men!
 Aboard your ships and hoise up sail with speed.
 A god me wills, sent from above again,
 To haste my flight and wreathen cables cut."

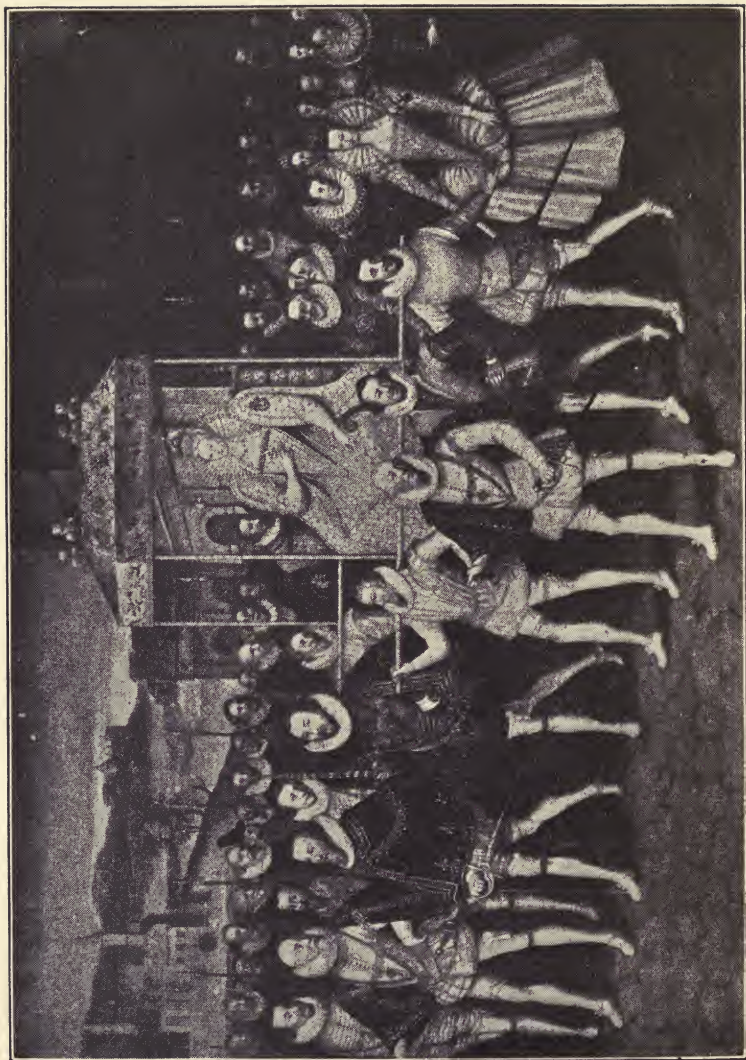
In 1557 — only a year before Elizabeth became Queen — there appeared a remarkable collection of English poetry

called *Tottel's Miscellany*, which contained the best verse of Wyatt and Surrey, as well as the lyrical efforts of less well-known writers. That volume marks the beginning of the great literary outburst that was to characterize the Elizabethan Age as one of the leading periods in the world's literature.

CHAPTER V

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

1. **An Age of Expansion.** The long reign of Elizabeth (1558–1603) followed immediately after the very short reigns of her Protestant half-brother, Edward VI (1547–1553), and her Catholic half-sister, Mary (1553–1558). From the time of the Reformation and Henry VIII's quarrel with the Roman Church, England had been in a state of turmoil. There had been repeated religious persecutions and much intolerance on all sides. With the accession of the "Virgin Queen" a new and remarkable age began. Elizabeth was twenty-five years old at the time of her accession, unusually well educated for the period, and thoroughly devoted to the welfare of her country and her subjects. She refused to show undue favor to any party and insisted upon broad tolerance for all. By the time she had reigned twenty-five years England had experienced a great industrial and commercial development. Her explorers were bringing back treasure and stories of remarkable adventures in the New World; her merchants and navigators were challenging the maritime supremacy of Spain. With the crushing of the "Invincible Armada" sent out by the proud Spaniards in 1588 there came the crowning years of her reign. England had never known such a period of patriotic fervor as in the decade that followed. The wealth of literary expression, especially in poetry and drama, made manifest the general recognition of the grandeur of the age. The poets vied with each other in their tributes to the Queen and to her innumerable virtues; the dramatists fired the imagination of the




A Progress of Queen Elizabeth

crowds that gathered daily to witness the plays in the theaters. As we read the pages of Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, Shakespeare, and their host of literary associates we cannot fail to catch something of the almost universal enthusiasm for "good Queen Bess" and the unparalleled glory that her beneficent reign had brought to England.

2. Elizabethan Prose. The least important contribution to literature during this period was in prose form. Apart from Bacon's *Essays*, none of the Elizabethan prose works found their way into enduring literature. This was not so much due to any lack of inspiration in the writers as to a defect in style that is quite evident when we compare the prose with that of later periods. Medieval scholars, who had been accustomed to writing in Latin, evolved long and complicated sentences in that language. The earliest English prose writers followed that tradition, because they did not realize the strength and ease of the shorter, simpler sentences with which we are now familiar. They permitted their loosely jointed clauses to ramble on indefinitely with a wealth of ornamentation and elaborate digression that achieved novelty at times, but rarely clearness or force. The imaginative power of the age, which did so much to glorify the poetry and drama produced during the reign of Elizabeth, was really a hindrance to the development of a direct and effective prose style.

This tendency toward artificiality of expression was most marked in the writings of John Lyly (1554?–1606), whose popular prose romance, *Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit* (1579), not only set a style in ornamental writing, but gave us the word *euphuism*, which is still used in reference to that particular practice. We must not think of *euphuism* as meaning the use of big words, or of writing in a rhythmical manner. It really means the use of unfamiliar words or phrases, usually of Greek or Latin origin, a balanced form of construction with phrase against phrase, or clause against



clause, a fondness for alliteration and quaint lengthy similes, frequently drawn from the most unusual sources. The euphuist consciously indulged in elaborate verbal gymnastics; he juggled his words and phrases in a fantastic manner calculated to win the admiration of his reader. A quotation from Lyly's own pages will serve best to illustrate the style. In *Euphues* the Lady Flavia asks one of the gentlemen if he considers it desirable for young men and women to associate freely. He replies in a long disquisition ending as follows:

I think, Madam, you will not be so precise, to cut off all conference, because love cometh by often communication, which if you do, let us all now presently depart, lest in seeing the beauty which dazzleth our eyes, and hearing the wisdom which tickleth our ears, we be enflamed with love.

But you shall never beat the fly from the candle though he burn, nor the quail from hemlock, though it be poison, nor the lover from the company of his lady though it be perilous. . . .

A lover is like the herb heliotropium, which always inclineth to that place where the sun shineth, and being deprived of the sun, dieth. For as lunaris herb, as long as the moon waxeth, bringeth forth leaves, and in the waning shaketh them off; so a lover whilst he is in the company of his lady, where all joys increase, uttereth many pleasant conceits, but banished from the sight of his mistress, where all mirth decreaseth, either liveth in melancholy, or dieth with desperation.

Needless to say, even the Elizabethans were aware of the defects of such a style. The younger writers were tempted to introduce the graces of euphuism into their work, but the wiser men exposed it to ridicule. Euphuism is most interesting to us because of its influence on Shakespeare. In his earlier plays, like *Love's Labor's Lost*, we find several courtiers seriously using the euphuistic style in their conversation, but in the mature play of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare lets the silly fop Osric talk euphuistically only to have his "golden words" ridiculed by Hamlet.

The only minor Elizabethan prose writers in whom we are interested to-day are those whose works influenced Shakespeare. These include Raphael Holinshed, whose *Chronicle*, or *Annals of England*, gave Shakespeare so much material for the plays dealing with legendary or actual British history; Sir Thomas North, whose excellent translation of Plutarch's *Lives* did similar service for the plays with a Greek or Roman setting; Thomas Lodge, who wrote a romance, *Rosalynde*, which supplied the plot for *As You Like It*, and finally, Robert Greene, whose *Pandosto* was the source for *The Winter's Tale*. The most important theological writers of the period were Richard Hooker, who wrote *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* for learned readers, and John Foxe, whose *Book of Martyrs* made popular the stirring stories of the heroes of the Reformation and had a marked influence upon the development of Puritan thought in England.

3. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). Among the illustrious Elizabethans who wrote both prose and poetry there is no figure more romantic than that of Sir Philip Sidney, often spoken of as the "first gentleman" of Elizabeth's court. His noble



Sir Philip Sidney

birth, his ideal character, and the memorable incident of his untimely death on the battle-field of Zutphen, all serve to make his career worthy of study, even more so than

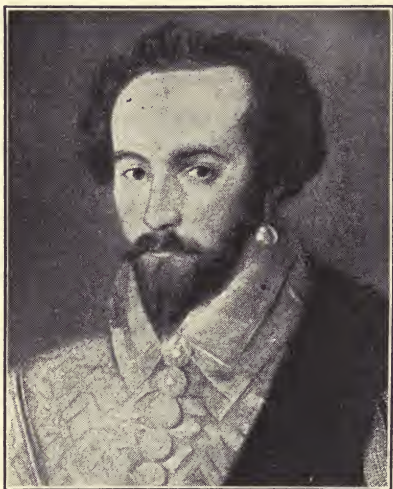
his literary works. He attached little importance to his writings and had apparently the nobleman's disdain for any glory that might come from them. None of his works was published during his lifetime. His most important prose-work was *Arcadia*, a long pastoral romance, written for the entertainment of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. In it he depicted the delights of the shepherd's calling and in very poetic language glorified a kind of utopian existence in the land of make-believe. Although Sidney thought so little of this romance as to charge his sister to destroy the manuscript after she had wearied of it, *Arcadia* was published in 1590 and became a source of inspiration to many poets of the period. Shakespeare drew from it the sub-plot for the story of Gloster and his two sons in *King Lear*.

The Apologie for Poetrie (printed 1595), now usually entitled *The Defense of Poesie*, was written in reply to a Puritan pamphleteer who had denounced the poetry of the age. The style of Sidney's treatise is rather heavy and unnatural, but the work deserves recognition as our first essay in literary criticism. Sidney's most important poetical work was *Astrophel and Stella*, a series of songs and sonnets addressed to a former sweetheart, Lady Penelope Devereux, who had wedded another nobleman. These sonnets rank among the best love-poems in our language.

4. Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618). Even more versatile than Sidney was Sir Walter Raleigh, whose life revealed the remarkable activities that lay within reach of an Elizabethan. Born in Devonshire, the home of so many great sea-rovers, he was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, and at seventeen was a soldier fighting in the ranks of the French Protestants. He was received with favor at court and knighted by Elizabeth. The story of his spreading his cloak in the mire for the Queen to walk over is the one universal anecdote associated with his name. He took part in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and seven

years later set out on a voyage in search of the mythical El Dorado. The account of his adventures in South America was published (1596) as *The Discovery of Guiana*. He distinguished himself as a soldier in the later wars with Spain, but after the death of Elizabeth he lost favor at court.

In 1603 he was found guilty of treason and imprisoned for thirteen years in the Tower, where he wrote his fragmentary *History of the World*. After his release he made another expedition to America, but on his return to England in 1618 was arrested and, to please the court of Spain, was beheaded for treason. In addition to the prose works already mentioned he wrote sonnets and love-poems of excellent merit.



Sir Walter Raleigh

Among the courtly singers he alone rivaled the popularity of Sidney and proved himself as capable of composing a tender lyric as of chasing a Spanish galleon. Although his literary reputation has been somewhat obscured by his varied activities as soldier, courtier, explorer, and political adventurer, Raleigh is recognized to-day as the most fascinating figure of his age.

5. Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626). The leading prose writer of the period was Sir Francis Bacon, whose career covered virtually the two long reigns of Elizabeth and James I. He was born in London, as son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. After spending

two years at Trinity College, Cambridge, he took up the study of law at Gray's Inn. He was only sixteen when he accompanied the English ambassador to France, where he spent several years, mastering the arts of diplomacy. In 1582 he was called to the bar and two years later was elected to Parliament. His career as a statesman was notable, and he soon established a reputation for eloquence. He was repeatedly elected to Parliament and in 1594 be-



Sir Francis Bacon

came Learned Counsel to the Queen. After the death of Elizabeth in 1603, Bacon, unlike so many who had won favor with her, retained the good will of James I and rose with startling rapidity to high places. He was knighted and within a few years became Solicitor-General and then Attorney-General. In 1616 he was made Privy Councilor and two years later became Lord Chancellor, besides being elevated to the peerage as Baron Verulam. There was

soon a turn in his fortunes, however, and Bacon had to endure the stings of adversity. In 1621, shortly after he had been made a viscount, he was convicted on the charge of accepting bribes. The sentence involved his loss of office, the enormous fine of £40,000, and imprisonment in the Tower. The King, who was still friendly, soon released him and granted him an annual pension of £1200. Bacon spent the last five years of his life in comparative retirement, devoting his time to study and writing.

Bacon's *Essays*, for which he is principally remembered

to-day, appeared in 1597 and were the only important writings that he published during the lifetime of Elizabeth. Only ten essays appeared at that time, but by the close of his life he had extended the series to fifty-eight. This collection is noted for the great amount of practical wisdom packed within the little space of the individual essays, for they are nearly all brief and very clearly written. They cover a wide range of subjects, from "Friendship" to "Envy," and from "Fortune" to "Adversity." The best known are those on "Riches," "Studies," "Great Place," and "Ambition." Everywhere Bacon reveals the extent of his reading and the astuteness of his observation of men and affairs. In this work we find for the first time a clear, concise prose style that catches the modern spirit of the language. It is the earliest prose work in English that is widely read as a classic to-day.

Bacon's later works are more profound, and appeal especially to the scholar and the philosopher. His *Advancement of Learning* (1605) has been highly praised as [a landmark in English philosophy and contains much excellent writing. Not being altogether certain of the future importance of the English language as a medium for scholarly work, Bacon wrote his most important philosophical treatise, *Novum Organum* (1620) in Latin. It dealt with the methods of investigating knowledge and exerted considerable influence on the development of modern science. Bacon's last important work, *The History of Henry VII* (1622), was written in English and is still valuable because he had access to sources that have since been lost.

In intellectual power Bacon stood second to Shakespeare alone among the great Elizabethans. Within recent times certain misguided persons have sought to prove that Bacon wrote the plays of Shakespeare, but scholars who have studied the works of both writers most intently can readily distinguish the product of the cold, analytical intellect of

England's first great philosopher from the sympathetic, emotional utterance of the greatest of all poets. Bacon's *Essays* were written by a well-trained, well-read scholar; Shakespeare's plays were written by one who knew little Latin and less Greek, but far more about the human heart and the great world of nature.

6. Elizabethan Songs and Translations. With the publication of *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557) began an epoch of lyrical poetry such as England had never known before. The age seemed surcharged with emotion and naturally expressed itself in song. The sonnet was especially popular, but other lyrical forms were practiced with great skill. Most of the poets wrote of love, and some of them composed long sequences of sonnets to a real or imaginary sweetheart. Usually the lady was addressed as Celia, Diana, Phillis, Delia, or some other fanciful name. Printers brought out collections of songs by various hands, often giving the books fantastic titles, such as *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, or *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*. Every one seemed to have the gift of song. Writers of romances and plays introduced the most charming lyrics into their works. England was spoken of as a "nest of singing birds" and well deserved the name. Narrative poems of greater length were also undertaken by many of the writers. Michael Drayton (1563-1631), who is best remembered for his ringing ballad, *The Battle of Agincourt*, devoted long years to a vast poem of 30,000 lines called *Polyolbion*, which is virtually a detailed geographical description of Britain. Christopher Marlowe, better known as a dramatist, composed a beautiful poetic fragment, *Hero and Leander*, which was later finished by a fellow-dramatist, George Chapman. A more extensive undertaking by Chapman was his translation of Homer, which was popular for many years and was the form in which Keats made his acquaintance with the great epic poet of ancient Greece.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

7. Life and Works. The greatest nondramatic poet of the age was Edmund Spenser, whose work is of such superlative merit as to rank him with Chaucer and Milton. Little is known of his parentage or early life. He was born in East Smithfield, London, near the Tower, and attended the Merchant Tailors' School. Later he continued his education at Cambridge as a sizar, or poor student who had to perform menial duties in exchange for his training. After leaving Cambridge in 1576 he visited the north of England, where he fell in love but failed to win the heart of a woman whom he mentions in his poetry as Rosalind. When he returned to London he brought back with him the manuscript of poems that he had written. His *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) attracted the attention of Sidney and others; before long Spenser was welcomed into the group of the courtly poets. In 1580 Lord Leicester secured for Spenser a position as secretary to Lord Grey, the Queen's deputy in Ireland. A rebellion broke out that had to be put down with much brutality. The estates of the Irish leaders were confiscated and turned over to the representatives of the government. Spenser received a large grant of three thousand acres, including Kilcolman Castle, which had



Edmund Spenser

been the property of the Earl of Desmond. As he was compelled to reside on the estate, Spenser soon came to regard himself as an exile. Amid the lovely surroundings of Kilcolman Spenser finished the first three books of his masterpiece, *The Faerie Queene*. Sir Walter Raleigh, who had received extensive grants of Irish property, visited Spenser in 1589 and was most enthusiastic when he heard the new poem. Spenser visited London and was presented to Queen Elizabeth. His three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590 and were received with the greatest acclaim. After his return to Ireland Spenser fell in love with an Irish girl whose name appears to have been Elizabeth Boyle, and he furthered his suit by writing a series of sonnets called *Amoretti*. In 1594 he married his Elizabeth, celebrating the occasion of his wedding with a beautiful poem entitled *Epithalamion*. During the following years he continued to work on *The Faerie Queene* and published three more books of that poem in 1596. Another visit to London about that time probably brought Spenser into personal touch with Shakespeare, Bacon, and Ben Jonson, who were then coming into prominence. During this period he wrote his only prose work, *A View of the State of Ireland*, which, however, was not published until 1633. In it Spenser recommended that harsh measures be taken to keep the Irish in subjection. Not long after this work in manuscript had been accepted in London as a reasonable plan for solving the Irish problem, Tyrone's Rebellion broke out and Kilcolman Castle was one of the first places to be set on fire by the rebels. Spenser with his wife and two children barely escaped. He never recovered from the terrible experience. Making his way back to England, he died in 1599 at Westminster, apparently in great want. He was buried near Chaucer in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

8. *The Shepherd's Calendar*. With the appearance of *The Shepherd's Calendar* dates the most important English

poetry since the death of Chaucer. The work consisted of twelve eclogues, or pastorals, one for each month of the year. For the most part they were discussions of nature, country life, and love, modeled upon classical examples in Virgil and Theocritus, with shepherds and shepherdesses as the principal speakers. A variety of meters was used in the various poems, and even here Spenser showed his fondness for archaic or old-fashioned words, such as were later used so extensively in *The Faerie Queene*. Although inferior to Spenser's great masterpiece and likewise to the best of his *Amoretti*, *The Shepherd's Calendar* should be remembered as the first pastoral poem in our language.

9. **The Faerie Queene.** Spenser's plan for *The Faerie Queene* was one of the most elaborate in all literature. There were to be twenty-four books, as in the great epics of Greece, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. These books were each to consist of twelve cantos, and each canto was planned to contain about fifty of the nine-line stanzas. Twelve books were to be devoted to the twelve private virtues and twelve more to the public virtues. The central hero of the plan was Prince Arthur, who typified the ideal ruler, the embodiment of all the virtues. In each book a knight representing the corresponding virtue waged battle against certain evils. After all the knights had successfully accomplished their many adventures, the poem was to have culminated in the marriage of Prince Arthur with Gloriana, the Faerie Queene. Inasmuch as Spenser wrote only six books, apart from a short fragment of a seventh book, it is evident that his vast plan was only one-fourth complete at the time of his death, yet it extends to a total of over thirty thousand lines. The first book (Holiness) deals with the adventures of the Red Cross Knight; the second (Temperance) has Sir Guyon for its hero; the third (Chastity) tells the legend of the female hero Britomartis; the fourth (Friendship) tells of Cambel and Triamond; the fifth (Justice) is the

legend of Artegall; the sixth (Courtesy) presents the adventures of Sir Calidore. It was probably Spenser's intention to devote the seventh book to Constancy, but only two beautiful cantos were finished. There is a rumor that six more books of the poem had been written and were destroyed when the Irish sacked Kilcolman Castle, but there is no evidence to confirm that report.

10. Significance of the Faerie Queene. It is impossible to give any summary of the wealth of incident and romantic adventure that Spenser crowded into the pages of his great poem. Monsters, giants, nymphs, fauns, magicians, sirens — in short, all sorts of creatures are associated with the experiences of the beautiful ladies and the chivalrous knights. There is a double and occasionally a triple system of allegory in the poem. At times the allegory is quite clear; again, it may be most confusing. A full understanding of the allusions is not necessary, however, to the enjoyment of the poem and an appreciation of the remarkable imaginative power that made such a plan possible. It is well to know that Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, is none other than Elizabeth herself; that the false Duessa is Mary, Queen of Scots; that Prince Arthur is Lord Leicester; and that Sir Calidore is Sir Philip Sidney. In fact, good friends like Sidney and Raleigh were represented in different characters of the poem. Doubtless many of the personifications were quite clear in Spenser's own day, but are not so readily understood now.

For this poem Spenser devised a new meter, peculiarly his own, and successfully imitated by Thomson, Byron, Keats, and other later poets. The Spenserian meter consists of a stanza of nine lines, in which the first eight have five iambic feet, while the ninth line has six. The evident intention of the poet was to avoid monotony by this device. The lines rhymed a b a b b c b c c, and may be illustrated by the following typical stanza describing the Cave of Mammon:

At last he came unto a gloomy glade,
 Cover'd with boughes and shrubs from heavens light,
 Whereas he sitting found in secret shade
 An uncouth, salvage, and uncivile wight,
 Of griesly hew and fowle ill favour'd sight,
 His face with smoke was tand, and eies were bleard,
 His head and beard with sout were ill bedight,
 His cole-blacke hands did seeme to have been seard
 In smythes fire-spitting forge, and nayles like clawes appeard.

11. Spenser's Language. In the stanza just quoted we find a number of unusual words, as well as familiar words in unusual spelling, yet apart from these, the language is readily understood to-day. Spenser was fond of digging up old words or obsolete forms, such as *disleal*, *eyne*, *gan*, *maugre*, *nathless*, *woxen*, etc., to give a certain archaic flavor to his lines, but in form his language is not far removed from that which might be used by a modern poet in similar imaginative writing. When the demands of meter or of rhyme were imperative, Spenser did not hesitate to change words or to invent new ones to meet his need.

12. Characteristics of Spenser. Few critics would deny Spenser his place among the greatest of English poets. When we become familiar with his best work we can readily understand why he is called the "poet's poet" and why he exerted so strong an influence on Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. There is exquisite melody in his verse, if it is read properly, and there is a keen sense of the beautiful in his contemplation of human life as well as of nature. No doubt many modern readers would be wearied by the length of *The Faerie Queene*, or would become confused in the complication of its allegory if they attempted to follow it carefully, but no true lover of poetry can fail to catch the spirit of Spenser's genius if he chooses to read anywhere at random in his pages. What would probably impress him most is the glorious ideal presented in his fine concep-

tion of his masterpiece, which reflects a nobility of soul that only a few of the more inspired poets have attained.

THE ENGLISH DRAMA

13. Beginnings of the Drama. Although some religious people nowadays express their strong disapproval of the theater as an institution in our social life, it is interesting to note that the English drama began in the Church, and particularly in association with two of its holiest days. The festivals of Christmas and Easter in the Middle Ages first suggested the use of pantomime and of spoken dialogue to enforce upon the imagination of the unlearned worshippers the significance of those sacred occasions. Thus the primary intention was to instruct and uplift the spectator. From representations of incidents connected with the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, it was but a step to the enactment of scenes in the life of Christ and to the presentation in dramatic form of the popular stories in the Old Testament. Soon every significant story in Holy Writ and many of the tales and legends associated with the lives of the saints had been cast into dramatic form for presentation either within or outside the church.

14. The Miracle Plays. In France, where the early religious drama was well developed, a distinction was made between a Miracle Play, which represents incidents in the life of a saint, and a Mystery Play, which deals with events connected with the life of Christ or with any Old Testament story that foreshadows His coming. In England, however, there were few genuine miracle plays, and that term is now applied broadly to include all plays that concern any Biblical character in the Old or the New Testament, as well as saints not mentioned in the Bible.

The earliest miracle play of record in England is one relating the life of St. Katharine, performed at Dunstable in the year 1110. Such plays were especially popular dur-

ing the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries, but were dying out in the period of Shakespeare's boyhood. They attracted such large audiences in their early history that it was soon impracticable to give the representation within the church. The spectacle was accordingly removed to the church-yard, and when the crowds grew too large there, the performances were given in the open town squares or market-places throughout England.

15. The Miracle Cycles. From the presentation of separate plays, taken here and there from the Bible, it was but a logical step to the orderly performance of an entire series of plays telling the whole Bible story from the Creation to the Day of Judgment. These cycles, as they were called, became very popular, and each important town or district developed its own group for local presentation. Usually the entire cycle was produced every spring in



York Minster

a series of performances beginning on Corpus Christi Day. Most of those cycles have disappeared, but there are a few that have come down to us, and they give a good idea of the widespread vogue of the religious drama. The four cycles in question are the York, the Chester, the Coventry, and the Towneley (or Wakefield) Plays. The York Cycle includes forty-eight plays and is generally regarded as the most representative of all. The Chester Cycle has twenty-five plays of unequal merit, for the most part inferior to the

other cycles. The Coventry Cycle of forty-two plays lays greater stress on the New Testament and belongs to a later period than the rest. The Towneley Cycle of thirty plays includes many stories of the Old Testament, as well as the popular *Second Shepherds' Play*, which is a remarkable example of early comic drama. Most of these plays in their existing form date from the latter half of the fifteenth century.

16. Presentation of Plays. When the miracle plays were first given in their simplicity in the church or the church-yard, the parts in the drama were assumed by the priests or their assistants. Later, when the plays became more popular, their performance was intrusted to the various trade-guilds of the town or district. There was considerable rivalry among the guilds, as each one wished the performance of its particular play to surpass the others. Money was lavished on costumes and properties that were needed in the presentation. Among the surviving records of expenses we find such quaint items as these:

Paid for a pair of gloves for God	2 d.
Paid for four pair of angels' wings	2 s. 8 d.
Paid for a pair of new hose and mending of the old for the white souls	18 d.
Paid for a pound of hemp to mend the angels' heads	4 d.
Paid for washing the lawn bands for the Saints in the church	2 d.
To Fawston for hanging Judas	4 d.
To Fawston for cock-crowing	10 d.

Those who distributed the various plays among the guilds were not wanting in humor, as they gave the Fall of Lucifer to the tanners, the story of Noah and the building of the ark to the shipwrights, the Last Supper to the bakers, and the Crucifixion to the butchers. The performances were given on wooden platforms mounted on wheels. The space

beneath the platform could be draped and used as a dressing room by the actors. As soon as the play was over, the platform was drawn away and a new platform, properly set for the next play in the cycle, was brought up. Meanwhile the first play was performed again in another open space, where another audience had been waiting for it.



A Miracle Play at Coventry

17. The Comic Element. When the miracle plays passed from the hands of the priests to the trade-guilds, there crept in humorous details that were not in Holy Writ. The crowds that assembled to witness the spectacles wanted to be entertained, and the actors soon found out what pleased the audience most. We must therefore not be surprised to find much horse-play and low comedy in the public performances of the Bible stories. Thus the play of Cain

and Abel is enlivened by a saucy plow-boy who pokes fun at Cain and engages in rough tussling with him. In the story of the Flood we find Noah's wife represented as a talkative shrew who refuses to enter the ark, because she prefers to gossip and drink ale with her neighbors. Finally she is dragged in, kicking and shrieking, by her disgusted sons, and Noah greets her with the words

“ Welckome, wife, into this bote! ”

whereupon she cuffs him on the ear and exclaims

“ Have that for thy note! ”

Noah realizes his mistake as he rubs his ear and says sadly:

“ Ha, ha! Marye, this is hotte!
It is good for to be stille.”

18. The Second Shepherds' Play. One of the most charming of all the miracle pieces is the *Second Shepherds' Play* of the Towneley Cycle. The shepherds are watching their flocks on the eve of the Nativity. They are joined by a yeoman named Mak, whom they regard with some suspicion, as he has the reputation of being a sheep-stealer. When they lie down to sleep they compel Mak to lie between two of them for the security of their flocks. As soon as they are all snoring, Mak rises cautiously, steals a sheep and hastens home with it. He shows his booty to his wife, who fears the bleating of the sheep if their house should be searched. She suggests that they should put the sheep into the cradle and cover it with clothes. If the searchers come into the house, she will warn them away from the cradle so that they may not waken the baby. Thereupon Mak hastens back to the sleeping shepherds and resumes his place between them. When they awake and find Mak still asleep, they rouse him. He reminds them that he has not stolen any of their sheep and departs for his home. As

soon as one of the shepherds discovers their loss suspicion falls on Mak in spite of his innocent departure. They go to his house and search everywhere. Mak implores them to have some regard for his sick wife and for her baby in the cradle nearby. The shepherds are about to depart, convinced that they have wronged poor Mak, when they decide to make amends by giving him a sixpence for the baby. Disregarding Mak's objections, one of the shepherds insists on seeing the baby.

“Gyf me lefe hym to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.
What the devill is this? He has a long snowte!”

In spite of the protests of Mak and his wife that the sheep is a changeling for the baby they laid in the cradle, the shepherds are now convinced of his guilt and toss him in a sheet till they are quite exhausted. Thereupon an angel's voice sings *Gloria in excelsis* and bids them go to Bethlehem to see the Babe lying in the manger. The shepherds obey the celestial voice and the play ends with their devotion at the cradle of the Infant Christ.

19. The Morality Play. In the next stage of dramatic development we find a type of play in which the characters are not human beings, but personified abstractions such as Faith, Charity, Truth, Gluttony, Avarice, and numerous others who embody the virtues or vices that they represent. Such plays probably began in the period when allegory was popular in poetic literature. Poems like *Piers Plowman*, *Romaunt of the Rose*, or *The Hous of Fame* were certain to suggest the dramatic possibilities in tales of contending human traits. The morality play represented a distinct advance over the miracle play in one respect, because the writer did not find his story ready made, but had to use his imagination in shaping the action. Unfortunately, most of the moralities were written by men who were over-anxious to enforce a lesson and who therefore made their

work insufferably dull by preaching to their audiences instead of entertaining them. Some of the writers sought to enliven matters by introducing a new character called the Vice, who developed into the clown or fool in later drama. It was his duty to play tricks on the virtues and also to annoy the Devil by beating or prodding him with a wooden sword. Again and again the Devil would prance about Hell-Mouth, which was usually represented on one side of the stage as a hideous dragon's head with distended jaws. From within came red fire and smoke, while at the portals were numerous noisy imps attending the archfiend. In the end, when the virtues triumphed, the Devil disappeared into the flaming Hell-Mouth with the Vice on his back.

Among the best morality plays were *Hyckescorner*, in which Imagination and Free-Will show the path to Irreligion; *The Castell of Perseverance*, which depicts man as shut in a castle defended by the virtues against a besieging army of the vices — an idea similar to that used by John Bunyan in *The Holy War*; and, best of all, *Everyman*, a morality that deserves to be ranked among the masterpieces of religious drama.

20. Everyman. The hero, Everyman, a gay, care-free young fellow, is suddenly summoned by a weird visitant, Death, who bids him prepare for the inevitable pilgrimage and to bring along the record of his life. Everyman pleads that he is not ready for the journey, that Death has come when least expected; he offers Death a bribe of a thousand pounds. Death scoffs at the offer; he gives no respite to pope or emperor, and he will not spare Everyman. Tears and entreaty are of no avail; Everyman gets only a brief delay in which to get his friends to accompany him. He turns to his companion Fellowship, who has always professed his warm regard, but when Fellowship learns of Everyman's plight he makes off at the first opportunity. Everyman then appeals to Kindred and to Goods (Wealth)

to accompany him on the way, but both declare they cannot go. Everyman realizes that all these are false friends indeed in the hour of trial. He turns to one whom he had long neglected — Good Deeds—but, alas, Good Deeds lies weak and helpless on the ground. Everyman next appeals to Knowledge, who is willing to go along and be his guide. Knowledge leads him to Confession; by his sincere repentance he has delivered Good Deeds from sickness and thus has another friend to stand at his side. They call in others



Photo. Byron, N. Y.

A Character Group in "Everyman"

— Discretion, Strength, Beauty, and Five Wits — who at first agree to go along, but when they learn that Everyman is going to the Grave, they quickly depart. Poor Everyman cries out in terror that he is forsaken, but Good Deeds and Knowledge stay with him till the end, as he commends his soul to Heaven.

21. Interludes. A third stage in the development of the English drama reveals a type of short play or diverting entertainment called the Interlude, which was presented in connection with a banquet or other important festivity.

Dancing and music were associated with the kind of diversion arranged by writers like William Cornish (died 1523) and John Heywood (1497?–1580?) during the reign of Henry VIII. Recent critics are inclined to attribute to Cornish certain interludes that were formerly regarded as the work of Heywood. Among the best of these is *The Four P's*, which is a contest of wit engaged in by a Pardoner, a Palmer, a Pedlar, and a Poticary. In the course of their talk an argument arises whether the Pardoner or the Palmer is the bigger liar. The Pedlar suggests a lying contest between the two and agrees to act as judge. The Pardoner tells of a trip to Purgatory to secure the release of a woman whom he had known. The Devil agrees to give her up, because two women give him more trouble than all the rest of his charges. The Palmer pretends to be very much surprised at this reflection upon women. He declares that he had seen fully five hundred thousand women in his travels,

Yet in all places where I have been,
Of all the women that I have seen,
I never saw or knew in my conscience
Any one woman out of patience.

Thereupon the Poticary cries out, "By the Mass, there is a great lie!" The Pardoner admits he never heard a greater, and the Pedlar then decides in favor of the Palmer as the more accomplished liar.

22. The First Plays. The first dramatic composition that closely approximated the later form of English plays was a comedy called *Ralph Roister Doister*, written before 1541 by Nicholas Udall (1505–1556). Udall was a master at Eton College and evidently wrote his play to be acted by the Eton students. It is founded on a Latin comedy by Plautus, and deals with the adventures of a silly fellow who has fallen in love with a widow. She is betrothed to another and makes Ralph the victim of her jokes. The

second English comedy was *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1552?), which was acted at Christ College, Cambridge, and is now regarded as the work of William Stevenson, of whom little is known. Its characters are drawn from the lower classes, and its situations and language are rather coarse. The first tragedy was *Gorbudoc*, written in blank verse by Thomas Sackville (1536–1608) and acted in 1561. It followed the models of the classical Greek drama and was a very dull affair. The classical unities, as they were called, demanded that the action of the play be confined within the space of twenty-four hours, that there be no change of scene, and that only one main plot be developed in the play. If Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists had permitted themselves to be hampered by the first two rules just mentioned, the record achieved by the Elizabethan drama would have been far less brilliant.

23. The Theaters and the Actors. After the period when performances of miracle plays in public squares were common and before the period of regular theaters, plays were usually performed in the court-yards of inns situated in London and in other towns. A low stage was erected at one end of the yard, and the open space in front served for



Interior of the Swan Theater

that part of the audience that stood during the performance. This space corresponded to the pit in English theaters or the orchestra in American play-houses. The two or three tiers of balconies that ran around the inn-yard at the different floors of the inn gave the guests who occupied the upper rooms (and other persons who paid for the privilege) a chance

to witness the play from a better location. These tiers gave the suggestion for the balconies and galleries that were later incorporated in the regularly built theaters. The first building especially designed for dramatic representation was erected in London in 1576 and was known as The Theater. Among the other theaters of London built during the lifetime of Shakespeare were the Curtain, the Rose, the Swan, and the Hope. The most famous of all were the Blackfriars and the Globe, because they were controlled by the companies in which Shakespeare had an interest, and in them the best of his mature plays were first performed.

Most of the theaters were octagonal or round in shape, although the Fortune was square. There was no roof over the central part of the building, so that the audience in the pit was exposed to the inconvenience of inclement weather. Those who had paid a penny to stand there were referred to as the "groundlings," and much of the buffoonery and horse-play was intended for their special benefit. Performances in the public theaters began at two or three o'clock in the afternoon and lasted from two to three hours. Private theaters, of which there were very few, were permitted to give performances at night, but Elizabethan England did not generally approve venturing abroad after nightfall. There was no curtain in front of the stage as in a modern play-house, because there were no scenes to be shifted. A few properties, such as thrones, tree-stumps, chairs, tables, and beds were enough to serve their purpose. The intensely imaginative mind of the Elizabethan created its own scenic setting for the glorious poetry of Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists. Perhaps they were more successful in creating an illusion than we are in these later days of elaborate stage-carpentry and remarkable lighting effects. The actors took special pride in their costumes and "make-up." Records show that large sums were spent for costly fabrics, shoes, wigs, and similar fittings of

the actor. All the parts were assumed by men and boys. No women appeared on the stage prior to 1660. The lack was not generally felt, because the boys who took feminine roles were well trained, and the boy-companies of Shakespeare's day even became dangerous rivals of the more mature players.

We must remember that Elizabethan England had no newspapers, no magazines, and no popular lecture courses. There were books, of course, but few of the multitude could read or afford to own them. The theater was in a sense the newspaper and the college of the crowd. It taught history, mythology, and similar subjects; it reproduced recent crimes and other current events. The untutored audiences of those days were especially interested in plays that portrayed violent or bloody murders, and in those that called for supernatural apparitions to terrify the guilty conscience. From time to time the taste changed, and the dramatists, as in more recent epochs, were quick to follow in the wake of any play that had achieved a great success.

24. Early Dramatists. Among the playwrights who were active before Shakespeare won the supreme place among the greater Elizabethans, a few may be selected for brief mention. John Lyly (1554?–1606), already spoken of as the author of *Euphues*, wrote eight comedies, mostly on classical or mythological subjects. Among them were *Campaspe*, *Sapho and Phao*, *Midas*, and *Endymion*. These plays were produced at the private theaters under royal patronage by boy-actors selected from the Chapel Royal and St. Paul's Cathedral. Lyly's comedies were well-written, abounding in sprightly dialogue and humorous situations. They exerted considerable influence on the early work of Shakespeare. George Peele (1558?–1597?) was a less able dramatist than Lyly, but wrote some excellent verse in his plays, *The Arraignment of Paris*, *David and Bathsheba*, and *The Old Wives' Tale*. Robert Greene (1558–1592) is inter-

esting not only as the author of the story *Pandosto*, which Shakespeare used as the basis for *The Winter's Tale*, but as a dramatist who produced a number of successful plays, including *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, an admirable portrayal of English country life. Thomas Lodge (1558–1625) is another dramatist who provided material to be enriched by Shakespeare's genius. His story of *Rosalynde* furnished the plot for *As You Like It*. Lodge's plays, *A Looking Glass for London and England* (written in collaboration with Greene) and *The Wounds of Civil War*, are less interesting than the works of his contemporaries. Thomas Kyd (1558–1594), unlike the other dramatists just mentioned, did not enjoy a university education and was therefore not one of the "university wits" as the rest are sometimes called. Nevertheless he wrote, about 1586, the most popular of all the early Elizabethan plays, *The Spanish Tragedy*, a 'raw head and bloody bones' play of the most violent type. Its very effective dramatic situations were not without influence on Marlowe and on Shakespeare.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593)

25. Life and Writings. Early in the year 1564, about two months before the birth of Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury. He was the son of a shoemaker and was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Comparatively little is known of his life, but he became an actor as well as a playwright. His remarkable dramas were written in the short space of six years. He was only twenty-nine when he became involved in a brawl with another man in a tavern near London and was stabbed to death. What this gifted man might have done if his dramatic talent had continued to develop side by side with Shakespeare is a matter of interesting speculation. Four of his plays are of great interest and reveal him as the most important of Shakespeare's predecessors. He was about

twenty-four when he wrote *Tamburlaine*, a play in two parts, concerning a Scythian shepherd who became a mighty conqueror of the Orient and was goaded by a mad ambition to rule the world. In the intoxication of his conceit he humiliated the kings whom he defeated by harnessing them to his chariot and cracking the lash over their heads. In the end, when afflicted with disease, he is forced to recognize the one great Conqueror to whom even the omnipotent ruler of the Orient has to bow. His last words are

“For Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, must die.”

Another play, *Doctor Faustus*, was based on a little chapbook telling of an aged German scholar who had made a compact with the Devil in exchange for prolonged life and worldly wisdom. The same subject was used long after by Goethe for his great play of *Faust* and is also familiar in operatic versions. The final scene, in which the Devil comes to fetch the soul of the wretched philosopher, is intensely dramatic.

The Jew of Malta, in some respects a forerunner of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, depicts an insane passion for wealth and vengeance. Like Shylock, Marlowe's chief character Barabas, an avaricious money-lender, lays traps for others and becomes the victim of his own evil plotting. He falls into a boiling caldron which he had prepared for another. The fourth play, *Edward II*, presents a picture of the reign of that weak and helpless king who was a mere plaything in the hands of unscrupulous advisers. It is a more orderly play than the others, but at the same time lacks their fire and imaginative force. As a drama it represents Marlowe's highest achievement.

26. Character of Marlowe's Work. Although Marlowe and Shakespeare were of the same age, we must remember that Marlowe's literary activity came earlier and that his tragic career was at an end before Shakespeare had written any important drama. The influence of Marlowe

upon Shakespeare was undoubtedly great. Most significant, perhaps, was Marlowe's artistic handling of blank verse. This form, as introduced by Surrey and first used in drama by Sackville in *Gorbudoc*, was stiff and monotonously regular. Marlowe gave it a freedom and an elasticity that must have convinced Shakespeare of the superiority of blank verse to all other meters, as far as dramatic composition is concerned. Note the contrast between these typical lines from *Gorbudoc*:

I meruaile much what reason ledde the king,
My father, thus without all my desert,
To reue me half the kingdome, which by course
Of law and nature should remayne to me.

and this passage from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*:

If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
Their minds, and muses on admired themes;
If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

Consider also the lovely lines about Helen of Troy in *Doctor Faustus*:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

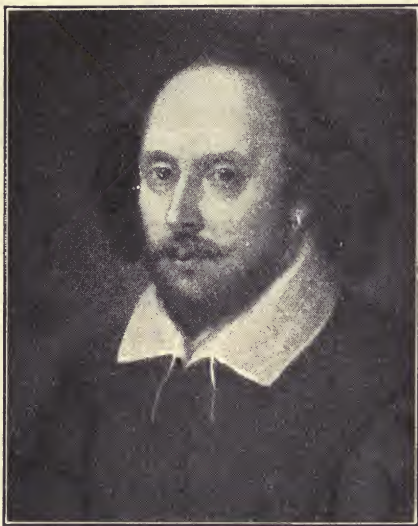
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

The imaginative power of Marlowe was such as to rank him among the great creative dramatists of our language.

He set the form that the drama was to take for the next half century. Shakespeare and his companions glorified the model, but the fact remains that they followed in Marlowe's footsteps. His faults were those of youth and unrestrained enthusiasm. At times his language was full of exaggeration and bombast. His sense of humor was imperfect, and he lacked the fine insight into human character that marked the work of his brilliant successors, but he blazed the trail that was to mark the way of the greatest dramatists in the whole range of English literature.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

27. The Significance of Shakespeare. There are few competent persons in the world to-day who would question the position of Shakespeare as the greatest of all writers. For almost two centuries the leading critics everywhere have testified to his preëminence and have explained why he holds such an exalted position. In a narrower sense, Shakespeare was merely one of a large group of men who sought to make a living by writing for the stage in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth; in a broader sense, he was the one transcendent writer who exceeded the achievement of all



The Chandos Portrait

William Shakespeare

his fellows and left us a heritage that we prize beyond anything else that literary art has produced. It was one of his own intimates, Ben Jonson, who said of Shakespeare, "He was not of an age, but for all time!" These significant words were penned by Jonson only a few years after Shakespeare's death, and they still ring with prophetic force. The message of Shakespeare to mankind is as pregnant with meaning for the present generation as it was for the audiences that crowded the Elizabethan play-



Stratford-on-Avon

houses to witness the first performances of his immortal dramas.

28. Parentage and Early Life. William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, and baptized on April 26, 1564. The precise date of his birth is not certain, but it is supposed to be April 23d, the day dedicated to St. George, the patron saint of England. Stratford is situated in a most attractive district of rural England, less than a hundred miles from London. Only a few miles northwest of the town is Warwick Castle, the ancestral seat

of the famous "King-Maker" of the Wars of the Roses. Not far beyond is Kenilworth Castle, where Lord Leicester gave a wonderful entertainment to Queen Elizabeth in 1576, so admirably described in Scott's *Kenilworth*. As Shakespeare was a boy of twelve at that time, it is quite possible that his father took him to the revels. The poet's father, John Shakespeare, was a dealer in various farm-products, such as grain, meat, and leather. He was a man of importance in the little town, holding the position of chief alderman for several terms. In 1557 John Shakespeare married Mary Arden, the daughter of a prosperous farmer of Wilmcote, not far from Stratford. William was the third of their eight children. His early life must have been the typical existence of a boy brought up in a country town. He rambled about field and forest, learning much of the plants at the wayside and the birds overhead. He heard the stories of elves, goblins, and wood-sprites that



Shakespeare's Birthplace



Kenilworth

are so dear to the hearts of children. He probably attended the Stratford Grammar School, where he pursued the usual studies — Latin grammar, the Catechism, and the Book of Common Prayer.

29. Early Manhood. We have considerable knowledge of financial reverses and difficulties that befell Shakespeare's father, but there are no authentic records of this period of Shakespeare's own life until 1582, when we learn of his securing a marriage license to wed Anne Hathaway, who lived at Shottery, about a mile west of Stratford. Shakespeare was less than eighteen at the time, while his wife was eight years his senior. Because of certain references in his plays and poems, some biographers have concluded that



The Stratford Grammar School

Shakespeare's married life was unhappy and that he regretted having married a woman so much older than he was. We do know definitely that Shakespeare had three children — a daughter, Susanna, who grew up and married Dr. John Hall, a staid Puritan

physician of Stratford; and twins named Hamnet and Judith. The boy Hamnet died at the age of eleven, but Judith reached maturity and married Thomas Quiney. These daughters of Shakespeare had children in turn, but the family did not survive beyond that generation.

There are rumors that young Shakespeare, burdened as he was at the age of twenty-one with the support of a wife and three children, found existence at Stratford very irksome. There is also a legend connecting Shakespeare with a deer-poaching episode on the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy at Charlecote Park, near Stratford. Whether Shakespeare fled to London to escape persecution on that account or to try his fortunes in the metropolis is not known. Even the time of his departure from Stratford is not certain, but

it was probably between 1585 and 1587. He apparently became associated with the theater soon after his arrival in London. As early as 1592 Robert Greene made a jealous reference in one of his pamphlets to "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers," and who was "in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie." This is usually accepted as direct proof that Greene then felt the force of his young rival's budding popularity as a dramatist and resented Shakespeare's borrowing of plots from other writers.

We know that Shakespeare became an actor and that he assumed parts of secondary importance. Among his rôles in his own plays were those of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*. It is also evident that his earlier efforts were spent upon revising or adapting the plays of other dramatists before he undertook to venture upon original work



The Hathaway Cottage

in that field. In 1593 he published a beautiful poem, *Venus and Adonis*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Southampton; a year later he brought out another poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, telling a pathetic story of the early days of ancient Rome. Throughout the last decade of the century he produced his dramas with great rapidity, averaging about two plays a year. As his work improved in quality, his fortunes grew better. He made friends in high places and the companies in which he was interested often gave performances at Court by royal command. He had prospered so well by 1597 that he was able to purchase New Place, the finest property in Stratford, and thereafter he added to his land holdings from time to time, as well as to

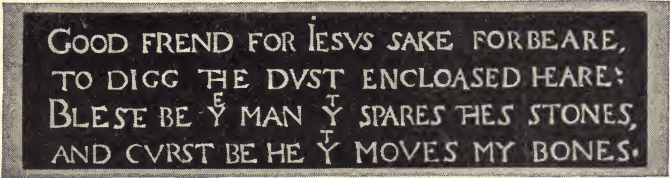
his shares in the London theaters with which he was connected. Records show that Shakespeare, unlike so many literary persons of his own and later days, was a man of practical business ability and knew how to take care of his money after he had earned it.

30. Shakespeare's Life in London. During the time that Shakespeare was writing his greatest plays (1598-1604) he lodged in the home of Christopher Mountjoy, a French wig-maker, at the corner of Silver and Monkwell Streets, London. A rather pretty story, brought to light a few years ago by an American scholar, Dr. Charles W. Wallace, gives us some idea of Shakespeare's environment in that period. The Mountjoys had a daughter Mary, who looked with favor upon Stephen Bellott, a young French apprentice in her father's establishment. Apparently young Bellott did not realize that he would be acceptable to the Mountjoys as a son-in-law, so Mrs. Mountjoy sought Shakespeare's aid to convey a delicate hint to the timid youth. Shakespeare succeeded so well that the betrothal and marriage of the young people followed in due course, but several years later a family quarrel developed because Mountjoy failed to pay over to the Bellotts a dowry that he had promised his daughter. The whole matter came up in court and Shakespeare was summoned as a witness. Shakespeare's interesting testimony revealed the part he played in bringing about the match, but showed that he knew nothing of the promised dowry. There is no record of the final decision in the case. While this incident has no bearing on Shakespeare's literary life, it is of significance because of the light that it throws upon his familiar daily associations in the period during which he was writing the greatest dramas in the world's literature.

31. Later Years. It was formerly believed that Shakespeare retired from active play-writing about 1611 and withdrew to his home at New Place, Stratford. The evi-

dence in the Mountjoy case tends to prove that Shakespeare kept up his interest in the theaters until near the end of his career. Possibly he took only occasional trips to London to look after his affairs there. His health began to fail in the early months of 1616 and he drew up his will, evidently fearing the worst. He died on April 23 — traditionally his birthday — and was buried in Trinity Church at Stratford, with the well-known quatrain cut into the stone above his resting-place to deter any who might thereafter be inquisitive enough to think of tampering with his grave.

32. Literary Periods. Complete editions of Shakespeare include thirty-seven plays which he produced during a



GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE:
BLESSE BE YE MAN YE SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE YE MOVES MY BONES.

Shakespeare's Epitaph

period of about twenty years. A few plays thus listed as Shakespeare's reveal little or nothing of his characteristic traits, and one of them — *Titus Andronicus* — is now generally believed to be by other writers. Some of the earlier dramas, such as the three parts of *Henry VI* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, as well as two of the latest, *Pericles* and *Henry VIII*, indicate the use of existing material which the master dramatist sought to improve, or the activity of some collaborator. It is customary to group the dramatic works of Shakespeare into four periods, according to the dominant influences under which the respective plays were written. Thus classified, the most important plays are:

First Period: *Love's Labor's Lost*; *The Comedy of Errors*;

A Midsummer Night's Dream; Two Gentlemen of Verona; Romeo and Juliet; Richard III; Richard II; King John.

Second Period: *The Merchant of Venice; All's Well That Ends Well; Henry IV* (two parts); *Merry Wives of Windsor; Henry V; Much Ado about Nothing; As You Like It; Twelfth Night.*

Third Period: *Julius Caesar; Hamlet; Othello; Macbeth; King Lear; Antony and Cleopatra; Coriolanus; Troilus and Cressida; Measure for Measure; Timon of Athens.*

Fourth Period: *Cymbeline; The Winter's Tale; The Tempest.*

33. The First Period (1588–1595). It was but natural that even a great dramatist like Shakespeare had to learn the rules of his art. Apart from his active association with the theater as an actor, there was nothing more helpful than his early experience in revising and adapting plays written by others. He corrected many of their faults, yet he revealed not a few of his own. It would be absurd to look upon Shakespeare as a sort of literary divinity who could do no wrong to the principles of art. The truest admirers of Shakespeare's genius are those who follow his steady growth in dramatic power from the first halting efforts of his apprenticeship to the supreme expression in the mature comedies and the exalted tragedies of his later life.

The plays of the first period are characterized by a rather rigid method of verse construction in which he seemed to compose his dialogue line by line, giving each verse a more or less distinct rhetorical value. There was little running-on of the thought from one verse to another, and less disposition to use blank verse. He also made free use of puns and far-fetched conceits during this period, revealing a tendency to imitate rather closely those dramatists whose work was meeting with favor. Among these early plays were *Love's Labor's Lost*, a fanciful French story, in which the char-

acters are very lightly sketched and the verse abounds in rhymed lines, lyrical measures, and the sort of literary adornment that marks the plays of Lyly. *The Comedy of Errors* is a boisterous farce, based on a play by Plautus, the Latin writer of comedies, presenting the ridiculous misunderstandings that follow the confusion of twin brothers and their twin servants. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* represents a distinct advance in dramatic power and is the first play to reveal Shakespeare's wonderful



Painting by Mlle. Oppenheim

Romeo and Juliet

imaginative power. This is not due to the conventional love-story, nor to the amusing by-play of the aspiring Athenian artisans with their "lamentable tragedy" of Pyramus and Thisbe, but to the delicate treatment of the scenes in fairy-land — the quarrels of King Oberon and his dainty Queen Titania over their changeling-boy, and the merry pranks of that irresistible sprite called Puck. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* we have the first of the Italian stories so skilfully treated by Shakespeare. This play anticipates some of the features that characterize his best comedies — depicting a situation of crossed loves and having his heroine masquerade as a boy — but it lacks the sustained power and depth of the later plays.

Romeo and Juliet, the first of the important tragedies, tells one of the most pathetic love-stories in our literature. Behind the romantic attachment of this pair of youthful lovers, lurks the bitter feud between their respective families — a strife that brings them to their doom. To this

period also belong the historical plays, *Richard III* and *Richard II*. The latter, like Marlowe's *Edward II*, portrays a weak and ineffectual sovereign, a striking example of hopeless incapacity for ruling. *Richard II* is really the better play of the two, but *Richard III*, because of the surpassing villainy attributed to that unscrupulous king, is the more popular and makes a most effective acting play



Painting by Kaulbach

Hubert and Arthur

to-day. *King John*, another historical play, has not held the stage so well, largely because the contemptible, blundering tyrant who ruled England in the days of Magna Carta is a less interesting stage figure than the artful Richard III. In the fourth act of this play we find one of Shakespeare's most appealing scenes — where Hubert is sent by the King to burn out the eyes of Prince

Arthur with hot irons. No student should fail to read that pathetic episode, which reveals the gripping power of Shakespeare's pen even in those earlier years of his dramatic apprenticeship.

34. The Second Period (1595–1600). During the next period Shakespeare made remarkable progress in dramatic art. He showed greater confidence in handling his material and maturer wisdom in portraying human character. At the very outset of this period he produced one of the most

popular of all his plays, *The Merchant of Venice*. In that absorbing drama Shakespeare successfully blended with a tragic theme two romantic love-stories that end happily. As usual, he took familiar material to build up his play. The story of the three caskets associated with Bassanio's wooing of Portia is very old, and the "pound of flesh" story of Shylock and Antonio is found in remote literature. The great trial-scene of this play reveals Shakespeare's finest qualities and proves his complete grasp of the dramatic situation. There is much lovely poetry in the fifth act, which is so often omitted in modern representations of the play. *The Merchant of Venice* was followed by an unpleasant satirical comedy, *All's Well That Ends Well*, in which Shakespeare exposes the emptiness of distinction that rests on earthly rank. The story, which was drawn from Italian sources, is one of considerable power, but is no longer popular because of the despicable character of the hero. Very different are the two parts of *Henry IV*, which are among Shakespeare's finest historical plays. There are spirited scenes depicting notable events of the reign and memorable episodes in the humorous sub-plot concerning the adventures of Prince Hal with Sir John Falstaff and his band of roisterers. Falstaff is one of the outstanding characters in world-literature — a colossus of humor, indeed, as prodigious in his lying and his cowardice as in his boasting and feasting.

There is a tradition that Shakespeare wrote his next play, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, at the request of Queen Elizabeth, who wished to see Falstaff in love. According to the story, Shakespeare wrote the play in a fortnight and pleased the Court greatly, but this Falstaff is a very different creation from the cowardly braggart of the *Henry IV* plays. There is much entertaining comedy in Falstaff's adventures as a gallant lover, but also much horse-play. This comedy does not rank among Shakespeare's best works. *Henry V*

is a great drama of patriotism — not so much a historical play as a series of soul-stirring episodes culminating in the glorious victory of Agincourt. Prince Hal has now become King and has turned his back upon the boon companions of his earlier years. Some of the old group are introduced, but Shakespeare wisely permitted Falstaff to die “off-stage.” Doubtless many an Elizabethan groundling felt sincere regret when Mistress Quickly narrated the story of Sir John’s last moments, and brought home to them the fact that they would see no more of the fat, lovable old rogue.

The masterpieces of the Second Period are the three splendid comedies that bring it to a close: *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. Shakespeare’s art had now reached a high level, and his outlook on life was as yet undarkened by the tragic events that were soon to overtake him. *Much Ado about Nothing* is the most serious of the three and represents the interweaving of two interesting love-stories. The leading characters, the sharp-witted lovers Benedick and Beatrice, are admirably drawn, and there is much humor in the pretentious officiousness of the constables, Dogberry and Verges, who are actuated by the best motives in undertaking to “comprehend all vagrom men.”

As You Like It is generally regarded as the most charming of all Shakespeare’s comedies. It glorifies youth, love, and the merry greenwood. Although the story was taken from Lodge’s romance, *Rosalynde*, Shakespeare imparted to the material a magic touch that was entirely his own. The plot is not notable for ingenuity, but the characters are most interesting as they develop the action in the idyllic setting of the Forest of Arden. There is probably in all Shakespeare no more attractive heroine than Rosalind — vivacious, witty, yet tender-hearted and wholly devoted to her beloved Orlando. Lodge’s story has no hint of such a character as the meditative, cynical Jaques, with his

famous soliloquy concerning the seven ages of man; nor of Touchstone, the delightful "clownish fool" who, like so many of Shakespeare's fools, gives utterance to thoughts that wiser men may well ponder over.

Twelfth Night, which brings the Second Period to a close, almost rivals the popularity of *As You Like It*. Critics regard it as the most graceful and most harmonious of Shakespeare's comedies. There is less wit than we find in *As You Like It*, but the action is more dramatic. Shakespeare did not hesitate to repeat devices that he had just used in *As You Like It* — such as having the heroine masquerade as a comely youth and inspiring love in the heart of another woman. Viola's love for the Duke is more serious and patiently devoted than Rosalind's love for Orlando. She is less self-assertive and less frolicsome; naturally she is less comfortable in her boyish disguise and feels more keenly the difficulties of the part she has to play in the tangled love-affairs of the comedy. Malvolio, the vain and pompous steward who imagines his wealthy mistress to be in love with him, is a more finished character study than Jaques. Much as we may smile at the misadventures of the poor fellow, we recognize none the less that he is still worthy of respect. Shakespeare did not make him a caricature, but a human being who unfortunately takes himself too seriously. His experiences are those of a man who does not possess a sense of humor; he belongs to that group of unhappy persons who consider themselves "misunderstood" by the world.



Painting by Pettie

Touchstone and Audrey

35. **The Third Period (1600–1608).** Many investigators have sought to account for the remarkable change in the character of Shakespeare's dramatic work about the year 1600 — a change of attitude toward life and his fellow-men that gave a somber tinge to all the work of his Third Period. Certain facts are known that may explain in part his turning from merry comedy to the soul-searching depths of tragedy. His father, who had suffered many disappointments and reverses, died in 1601. About the same time the Earl of Essex was condemned for treason after having foolishly organized a rebellion against the Queen. Shakespeare's friend and patron, the Earl of Southampton, was involved in the affair and imprisoned in the Tower. Shakespeare himself seems to have lost favor at Court, and there are many reasons to believe that his conscience troubled him sorely. We find little trace of this morbid depression in his first tragedy of the period, *Julius Caesar*, deservedly



Painting by Diehl

The Play Scene from *Hamlet*

the most popular of the Roman plays. From Plutarch's *Lives* came most of the material for this interesting study of the contending forces of aristocracy and democracy in ancient Rome. As a play, *Julius Caesar* is inferior to most of the great tragedies that followed, but it is

perennially popular as a stage spectacle because of the stirring "mob scenes" and of the fine parts written for Brutus, Cassius, and Mark Antony.

Immediately after this Roman tragedy came *Hamlet*, the best known of all Shakespeare's plays, but not the

greatest in imaginative quality nor as a well-constructed work of art. In spite of its great length — almost twice the length of *Macbeth* — there is little plot. Our interest centers almost entirely in the delineation of the “melancholy Dane” who finds his powers strangely paralyzed when a solemn duty is thrust upon him. The world seems never to tire of the fascinating problem of considering the mental and spiritual state of Prince Hamlet. It may care comparatively little for the hypocrisy of King Claudius, the folly of Polonius, the treachery of Laertes, or even the woes of poor, forlorn Ophelia — Hamlet himself is at all times the one dominating figure in the tragedy.

Othello, a much greater play than *Hamlet*, is a masterpiece of dramatic construction. From a collection of Italian short stories Shakespeare took the material which he wrought into this thrilling tragedy — perhaps the most terrible of all his plays in its pitiless portrayal of the sufferings of the innocent at the instigation of evil-minded persons. *Othello* is the typical tragedy of jealousy — the wrecking of the happiness of Othello and Desdemona by the malevolent Iago. No group of characters in any play is more fully developed than these three. Shakespeare made Iago so important a figure that great actors frequently alternate between that part and Othello. The play shows a fine sense of proportion and moves with great rapidity. The final scene has been described as the most intense in all modern literature, comparable to the finest work of the Greek tragedians.

Macbeth is acclaimed by many critics as Shakespeare's masterpiece, though others award the palm to *Othello*. As the latter is a tragedy of jealousy, *Macbeth* is a tragedy of ambition. The story of the Scottish general who was told by the “weird sisters” that he would be King of Scotland and the fulfilment of that prophecy are almost the entire business of the play, which is one of the shortest in Shake-

speare. There is no well-defined sub-plot and almost no attempt at humorous by-play or relief. Nowhere else has Shakespeare portrayed so impressively the horror of the guilty conscience. Never has the law of retribution been worked out more logically or more relentlessly than here. Once more, as in *Othello*, the spirit of Greek tragedy rules strongly in the progress of the action. Macbeth passes blindly onward to his fate like one upon whom the gods had placed the seal of destruction. In Lady Macbeth, companion in her husband's guilt, we have the most interesting of the women created by Shakespeare; a woman of strong, resolute nature, who does not flinch in the accomplishment of foul purposes. Only in the profoundly impressive sleep-walking scene when, no longer mistress of herself, she seeks to wash the imagined blood from her hands, do we fully realize the dread burden of remorse that her guilty conscience is carrying.

King Lear has been the subject of much lavish praise from the critics, some of whom have given it higher rank than *Othello* or *Macbeth* as a work of dramatic art. The main plot of Lear and his three daughters presents the theme of filial ingratitude with such power that several scenes are painful to witness on the stage. Unlike the other two great tragedies just mentioned, *King Lear* has a well-developed sub-plot which distracts our attention considerably from the main theme. There is not the same relentless progress toward catastrophe; with slight changes the story might be made to end happily, and aspiring dramatists of later periods did not hesitate to take the necessary liberties with Shakespeare's text. There is fine character-drawing in *King Lear* — the faithful Kent, the model of loyal friendship; the shrewd, pathetic jesting of the unnamed Fool, the greatest of all Shakespeare's clowns and fools; the forbidding figures of Regan and Goneril, monstrous in their ingratitude and relentless in their iniquity;

the almost angelic beauty of Cordelia's character; and finally, poor Lear himself, victim of his own decaying mentality and misplaced confidence — a mighty figure shorn of power, and raging in vain fury against the stern facts of circumstance.

Two other important tragedies of this period remain to be considered — *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. The former brings into the compass of a powerful historical



Painting by F. M. Brown

Cordelia's Portion

drama many significant events in the early days of the Roman Empire. Mark Antony, who made such a heroic figure in *Julius Caesar*, is here revealed in his later career as the victim of the beautiful Egyptian Queen, the "Serpent of the Nile." This play, which is rarely enacted nowadays, lacks the dramatic intensity of the preceding tragedies, since it is really a succession of episodes in the lives of those concerned. However, the picture of the noble Roman general gradually sinking to his ruin amid the

Oriental enticements of the Egyptian court is most impressive. All who come within the circle of the fascinating enchantress seem to tread the maze from which the only escape is death.

Coriolanus, the last of Shakespeare's tragedies, reveals the bitter struggles between the Roman patricians and the plebeians of the fifth century B.C. In portraying the vexatious social problems attending the "privileges of the few and the claims of the many," Shakespeare showed himself a great philosopher as well as a great poet and dramatist. *Coriolanus* has not been a popular play on the modern stage because it lacks the passion and the dramatic exaltation that we find in Shakespeare at his best, yet there are many admirable scenes in this fine study of social clashes in ancient Rome. *Coriolanus* himself is a noble figure, as much a victim of his aristocratic caste as of his own pride. His ill-concealed contempt for the fickle mob that can be swayed by every flattering demagogue leads to the decisive step that involves his ruin.

During the Third Period Shakespeare wrote several other somber plays that are less popular because they are so deeply tinged with the bitterness of spirit that afflicted the poet at that time. *Troilus and Cressida* tells the same story that Chaucer chose for his *Troilus and Criseyde* — the unmasking of a faithless sweetheart. The hero loses his belief in human honor and becomes a heart-broken cynic. Nearly all the Greek and Trojan heroes are satirized in this most unpleasant play. *Measure for Measure* deals with the exposure of an unjust, hypocritical judge who had posed as a model of virtue. It is a depressing story, redeemed only by the sweet character of the heroine Isabella. *Timon of Athens* presents the old story of the rich fool and his "fair weather" friends who desert him when his wealth is spent. Timon suffers a hideous awakening and rails bitterly against his fellow-men. It is easy to understand why these

pessimistic plays are rarely undertaken by modern actors and why they are unpopular among the readers of Shakespeare. They reflect a cynicism that is most disheartening and tend to shake one's faith in humanity. Shakespeare himself lived to see serener days than those that inspired these morbid satires, and there is no reason why we should not take our great poet at his best.

36. The Fourth Period (1608-1611). About the year 1608 the shadows that had been hanging over Shakespeare seemed to break away; his suspicion and his distrust of others vanished. There followed a mood of restful contemplation that found expression in the three serene plays of this period. All of them end happily and are written in a calm, broad-visioned spirit that reflected the "golden glow of life's afternoon." We pass from the turbulent and heart-rending scenes of his tragedies and from the bitter pessimism of his more cynical plays to a realization of his renewed confidence in mankind.

Cymbeline is a rather involved play, combining a story of legendary Britain with an episode from Italian sources. Its charming heroine, Imogen, depicts Shakespeare's ideal of a faithful wife devoted to a husband whose very nobility of character is almost the cause of his undoing. Many regard Imogen as the most perfect of Shakespeare's heroines. Charity in our judgment of others is impressed upon us as we follow the unfolding of this drama, in which two such noble natures as Imogen and Posthumus are innocently caught in the toils created by base creatures about them.

The Winter's Tale is, like its predecessor, a succession of lovely scenes. Two romantic stories, in which the mother Hermione and the daughter Perdita are the heroines, have been admirably intertwined in this play. Shakespeare gave little thought to the construction of this drama, but lavished his art on the development of the characters. The situations are similar to those that we find in the saddest of

tragedies, but in response to the spirit of the times, Shakespeare subtly turned the course of events to a happy outcome.

The Tempest, probably the last of Shakespeare's important plays, is curiously suggestive of farewells. The scene on "an uninhabited island" gave absolute freedom to the dramatist's fancy and resulted in a play unusually rich in imaginative power. Few dramas offer such diversified, yet happily delineated characters as the shipwrecked Italian princes and nobility; the frantic sailors shouting vain orders in the fury of the storm; the debased trio, Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano, even more bestial in their drunkenness; the innocent young lovers, Ferdinand and Miranda; the delicate sprite Ariel; and, dominating all, the commanding figure of Prospero who directs the strange events after the shipwreck with a supreme wisdom that keeps the desired end in view. Scholars have not been slow to suggest that there is clear intimation of Shakespeare's farewell to the drama in these beautiful lines of Prospero's near the end of the play:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

37. Sources of Shakespeare's Plots. It is interesting to note that Shakespeare took material freely from any source that offered a good story or detail adapted to his needs. Most of his English historical plays, including those that dealt with the early legendary history of Britain, like *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*, were based largely upon Holin-

shed's *Chronicle*. The plays dealing with Greek and Roman subjects were drawn mainly from North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. Current romances, such as Lodge's *Rosalynde* or Greene's *Pandosto*, were appropriated as readily as Italian or French stories that appealed to the poet. The important thing to remember is that Shakespeare's treatment of the theme glorified the original in every case. What may have been base metal was transmuted by his magic touch to the pure gold of art. The student of the plays should devote some time to a comparison of the source with Shakespeare's text so that the dramatist's genius may become more apparent.

38. Publication of the Plays. Elizabethan theater-managers did not approve the printing of plays, because they felt it would lessen the attendance at their performances. However, enterprising printers often managed to secure more or less garbled texts of the popular plays and issued them in small quarto form at about six-pence each. Some of these early quartos are extremely rare to-day, but they are most important because of the light they shed on the correct text of the play in question. Sixteen of Shakespeare's plays appeared in quarto form, and several were printed as often as five or six times. The first collected edition of the plays was the famous First Folio of 1623, prepared by two fellow-actors, Heming and Condell. The Second Folio appeared in 1632, the Third in 1663-1664, the Fourth in 1685. These four folios were the only collected editions of Shakespeare that appeared during the seventeenth century. Critical editions began to appear in the eighteenth century, the most notable being those of Rowe (1709), Pope (1725), Theobald (1733), Warburton (1747), and Johnson (1765). In more modern periods many of the most distinguished scholars have devoted their best talents to producing better editions of the master's works. The most comprehensive of these editions is the famous Variorum

Shakespeare, which was begun in 1871 by Dr. Horace Howard Furness and is still in course of publication by his son and namesake.

39. Shakespeare's Poems. In addition to his early nondramatic poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), Shakespeare also wrote a series of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets which probably belong to the same period, although they were not printed until 1609. They are a sequence dealing with love and include some of the finest sonnets in the language. Shakespeare did not follow the regular form of sonnet construction as introduced by Wyatt, in which the normal rhyme scheme was a b b a a b b a c d e c d e, but he preserved the tradition of fourteen lines, which he rhymed as follows: a b a b c d c d e f e f g g. The Shakespearean sonnet may be illustrated by this specimen:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:
 O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Some critics have sought to glean additional facts concerning Shakespeare's life from the revelations of the sonnets, but such analysis should be undertaken with great caution, as the results may often lead to unjust conclusions.

40. Characteristics. One of the fundamental qualities of Shakespeare is his remarkable knowledge of humanity

— not the precise knowledge of the careful student of books or the patient investigator of documents, but the deeper, truer knowledge that comes from a close observation of one's fellow-men. This quality, coupled with the poet's unusual imaginative faculty, made him equally successful in his description of an ancient Roman or a contemporary Englishman; of life in a palace or in a tavern. The quaint anachronisms in *Julius Caesar* and the other historical plays, as well as the limitations of Shakespeare's knowledge of geography revealed in *Twelfth Night* and elsewhere, are trifling matters at best. It is the infinite variety of the scenes that he conjured up for our delight, the startling revelations of the motives underlying human conduct, the insight into the very souls of the characters whom he created that mark Shakespeare as a master. If from his great portrait gallery we choose a half-dozen varied characters, almost at random — for example, Puck, Brutus, Falstaff, Cordelia, Caliban, and Lady Macbeth — and consider how vividly each of these stands out as a distinct personality, we can appreciate more fully the marvelous faculty that gave life and being to the hundreds of characters who move through his inspired scenes.

Moreover, there is in Shakespeare a fine strain of sympathy for human weakness — a charitable disposition to make allowances for the failings that are common to all. Only one who really loved his fellow-men could depict them with such fidelity. His well-developed sense of humor, so much in evidence in most of his plays, is quite in keeping with his own broad humanity. In many an instance he pointed a moral all the more effectively by means of laughter than by precept or solemn admonition. Perhaps the most notable trait of Shakespeare is the fine ethical sense that runs throughout his work — a recognition of divinely instituted laws and the suffering that attends their violation. Human faults and weaknesses are presented as the chains

that shackle great spirits to the earth. Base and ignoble passions are depicted not merely as abhorrent in themselves, but as the cause of much suffering and misery to the innocent who may happen to be caught in the toils. Small wonder that innumerable quotations from Shakespeare have become commonplaces on our lips and that his works are regarded as second in moral influence to the Bible alone.



Shakespeare's Tomb

Hundreds of volumes have been written to illustrate the qualities that make Shakespeare the most admired of writers. There is danger that we may spend too much time in reading about Shakespeare instead of letting his own great utterance speak for itself. It is a mistake to suppose that he must be laboriously studied with learned commentary to be appreciated. His own aim, first and last, was to entertain the people who flocked to see

his plays performed. On the printed page his plays will still entertain, in spite of learned notes and ponderous "introductions" that may be judiciously skipped. Great art always transcends its analysis and its interpretation; no critic can speak for Shakespeare as effectively as our supreme dramatist can speak for himself. Every student should read widely in those great plays and should get to know Shakespeare; for to know him is to love him, and literature can offer no greater boon.

41. Ben Jonson (1573-1637). The most distinguished of all the dramatists who wrote during the Age of Elizabeth was Ben Jonson. His varied career extended from the heyday of the drama until the period of its decline. The stepson of a bricklayer, he managed to secure an education at Westminster School and served as a soldier in the Low Countries. He took pride in the fact that he had killed an enemy in single combat. Later he became an actor, then a dramatist. In 1598 he killed a fellow-actor in a duel and had a narrow escape from the gallows by pleading "benefit of clergy." Although both training and temperament inclined his sympathies toward the classical tendencies in the English drama, his decision was unwise, and posterity rendered its verdict against him and his kind. He was a more accomplished scholar than Shakespeare, but he had the instinct to recognize the greatness of Shakespeare and praised him freely. Like the Samuel Johnson of a later period, Ben Jonson was a man of huge frame, very self-assertive in his criticism of others, and a recognized leader in his literary group, who accepted him as the most learned of poets. When he died in 1637 after a literary dictatorship covering a quarter century, he was buried with high honors in Westminster Abbey, and the epitaph, "O rare Ben Jonson," was carved on the slab over his grave.



Ben Jonson

42. Principal Works. Among his more important plays are *Every Man in His Humor* (1598), in which Shakespeare appeared as an actor; *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599); *Cynthia's Revels* (1600); *The Poetaster* (1601); *Sejanus* (1603); *Volpone* (1605); *Epicene* (1609); *The Alchemist*.

(1610); *Catiline* (1611); and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). His plays that have an English setting abound in satire and show an intimate knowledge of the life of his age. The Roman tragedies, unlike those of Shakespeare, give ample evidence of his painstaking efforts to secure historical accuracy. Jonson's plots are usually well constructed and are regarded as models of dramatic art. During the reigns of James I and Charles I he wrote many masques for presentation at Court. These masques combined lyrical and dramatic elements, and were usually produced with fine costumes and elaborate stage-settings. In his own time Jonson was accounted a greater writer than Shakespeare, but his plays, like those of the minor Elizabethans, are neglected by readers to-day and are never produced professionally. He is better remembered by the world at large for his song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes," than for all the plays he wrote during his long career.

43. Beaumont and Fletcher. The most interesting literary partnership in the Elizabethan drama was that of **Francis Beaumont** (1584-1616) and **John Fletcher** (1579-1625). Most of the other dramatists, including Shakespeare, collaborated at times with their fellows, but this pair worked together in most of their plays up to the time of Beaumont's death. They wrote successfully in every dramatic form that was popular during the period. As many as fifty-two plays are usually printed as their collected works. Among the best are *Philaster*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Shakespeare is believed to have had a hand in the last-mentioned play, which tells the same story as Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.

44. Other Dramatists. There are fully a dozen names of notable dramatists who labored side by side with the great leaders in building up the glory of the Elizabethan drama. **George Chapman** (1559?-1634), already spoken of as

a translator of Homer, wrote many plays, including a group of tragedies dealing with contemporary French history. **John Marston** (1575?-1634) was a satiric dramatist whose best work is in the misanthropic and cynical spirit of Shakespeare's neglected plays of the Third Period. **Philip Massinger** (1583-1640) was a playwright of great ability who had the distinction of writing *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, which continued to be produced long after other Elizabethan plays had passed into disuse. **John Ford** (1586-1640?) was another dramatist of merit and produced *The Broken Heart*, one of the most pathetic plays of that age. **Thomas Dekker** (1570?-1641?), **Thomas Middleton** (1570?-1627), and **Thomas Heywood** (1570?-1650?) may be associated as a trio born about the same time and bearing the same given name. They wrote many popular plays dealing with contemporary domestic manners in the middle and lower classes of society, a style very largely ignored by Shakespeare. **John Webster** (1580?-1625?) and **Cyril Tourneur** (1575?-1626?) were men of whom little is known, who wrote bloody tragedies abounding in violent scenes, yet enriched by the most imaginative poetry. Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil* rank among the most significant of Elizabethan plays.

45. Decline of the Drama. During the reign of Charles I there was a manifest decline in the moral tone of the drama. Even where the playwrights showed the brilliant genius of an earlier age, they usually disclosed a willingness to cater to the growing vulgarity of the period. There had always been marked antagonism to the theater on the part of the Puritan element, and this opposition now asserted itself more strongly. The last of the old group of dramatists was **James Shirley** (1596-1666), a playwright of comparatively minor importance, who lived to see not only the closing of the theaters in 1642, but their reopening with the Restoration in 1660. During the intervening eighteen

years no public dramatic performances were permitted in England. When the theaters were once more opened with the coming of Charles II, the conditions were very different from those that had made the Elizabethan drama one of the greatest imaginative outbursts in all literature.

CHAPTER VI

THE PURITAN AGE

1. **An Age of Austerity.** After the abundant inspiration of the Elizabethan Age had exhausted itself, there followed a period of literary repression for which the Puritans were largely responsible. Even during the care-free days of Elizabeth they had frowned upon the frivolities of romance and poetry, and had denounced the growing license of the stage. The Puritans were not a particular religious sect, as among them were found men representing all shades of belief, but they constituted the more austere element in society, who held that man's chief purpose was to follow the straight and narrow path of duty as they conceived it. During the somber reign of James I (1603-1625)



London Bridge in the 17th Century

they were in the ascendancy for a time, but under his son Charles I (1625-1649), who claimed to rule by divine right and who favored the pleasure-loving Cavaliers, they met with such opposition and ridicule that bitter conflict developed between the two parties. This strife led eventually to the Civil War, the execution of the King, and the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1649 with Oliver Cromwell as Protector.

With all its fine ideals and stern principles of conduct,

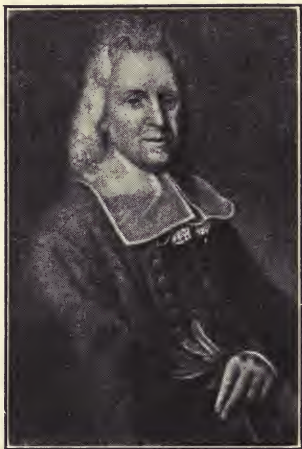
Puritanism unfortunately represented the spirit of intolerance. Its attitude was narrow and uncompromising. Such a force, no matter how sincere, was not good for literary development. It imposed a restraint that stifled inspiration and produced in place of the imaginative flights of the great Elizabethans a more labored expression of ideas based rather upon moral duty than upon emotional stimulus. Naturally not all of England was prepared to follow and to be restrained by such traditions. The Cavalier Poets still glorified the beauty of life and nature, but they were among the less important writers of the age. Only two great names — Milton and Bunyan — belong to this period of Puritan ascendancy.

PROSE OF THE PURITAN AGE

2. The King James Bible. Early in the reign of James I the question of a new, authoritative translation of the Bible was discussed. Conferences were held at Hampton Court to agree upon a plan of procedure. As a result fifty-four scholars were selected to undertake the work. For three years they labored at Oxford, Cambridge, and elsewhere in England on their respective parts of the important task. Finally, in 1611, they completed their work and brought out the "King James" Bible, or the Authorized Version, as it is frequently called. Although various revisions of the Bible have been undertaken in later times, the King James Bible continues to this day to hold the place of favor throughout the English-speaking world. None of the contributors was a prominent literary man, though many of them held high ecclesiastical places, yet collectively they succeeded in producing a scriptural version that is unrivaled for simplicity of phrasing, for beauty of expression, and for literary dignity. No other book has exerted so great an influence upon the style of later prose writers.

3. **Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667).** Among the stanch Royalists of the period was Jeremy Taylor, author of several theological works. The best of these were *Holy Living* (1650) and *Holy Dying* (1651). These companion books, in spite of their forbidding titles, are very readable treatises on the conduct of life and preparation for the world to come. In fact, *Holy Dying* is far more entertaining than *Holy Living*. They are written in rather florid prose, with a fine sense of rhythm. Coleridge called Taylor the most eloquent of divines, and those of his own day testified to his force in the pulpit.

4. **Izaak Walton (1593–1683).** Few men ever got more calm pleasure out of a long life than Izaak Walton, linen-draper of London. Having achieved a competence at fifty, he retired to the country and began a period of literary recreation by writing his graceful *Lives*, which were intimate pictures of Donne, Hooker, Herbert, and other contemporaries. At sixty he brought out his masterpiece, *The Compleat Angler* (1653), which has lived through several hundred editions and is more widely read to-day than all other books on fishing put together. His advice to anglers is not always above criticism, and his recipes for cooking fish have sometimes more literary than culinary merit; but it is a book brimful of the love of nature, an exquisite appreciation of the beauty of field and stream, of the open expanse of God's country, and of the heavens overhead. No modern devotee of nature has given us a more charming picture of the great world of out-of-doors.



Izaak Walton

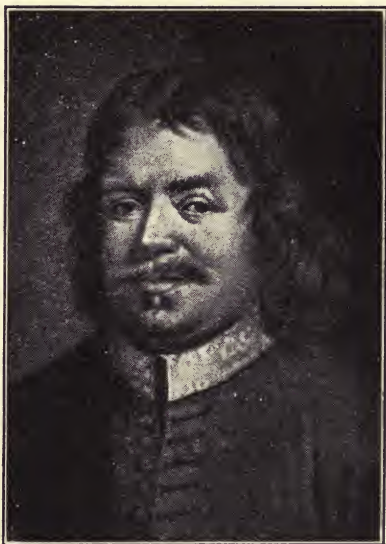
5. **Thomas Fuller (1608–1661).** Fuller was an Episcopalian clergyman who had such a wonderful memory that he was spoken of as a “walking library.” He produced a great number of books, including a *Church History of England* (1655) and a *History of Cambridge University* (1655), but nothing of more lasting interest than his *History of the Worthies of England* (1662). It is a pity that this rather commonplace title gives no hint of the wealth of humor that characterizes this admirable book. One does not ordinarily look for humor in theological writers, yet Fuller may fairly be regarded as the first of England’s prose writers to make a feature of humor. He it was who spoke of negroes as “images of God, cut in ebony” and who wrote: “Few are such infidels as not to believe doctrines which make for their own profit.” Concerning garlic he said: “Indeed the scent thereof is somewhat valiant and offensive; but wise men will be contented to hold their noses, on condition they may thereby hold or recover their health.” When Fuller finally undertook to compose his own epitaph, he wrote simply, “Here lies Fuller’s earth.”

6. **Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682).** Another writer of quaint English was Sir Thomas Browne, a graduate of Winchester School and Oxford, who later studied medicine in France and Italy. There was much of the Puritan spirit about his *Religio Medici* (1642) which undertook to describe the religion of a physician. It is read to-day not for its presentation of theological opinion, but for its charm and grace of style. His *Vulgar Errors* (1646) is a curious book full of all manner of odd information. It discusses solemnly whether elephants have joints; whether salamanders live in fire; whether ostriches digest iron; whether peacocks are ashamed of their legs; whether storks will live only in republics or free states; and whether a man weighs more dead or alive. He also gives vivid pictures of the basilisk, the phoenix, the griffin, the unicorn, and other interesting

creatures. *Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial* (1658) is a discussion of methods employed in disposing of the dead. Apart from its learned account of funeral ceremonials and its discussion of immortality, this treatise is remarkable for its sonorous prose and its dignified cadences. It reveals Browne's command of the language at its very best, notably his skill in an ornate, grandiloquent style that is still interesting to critics of literary art.

JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688)

7. Bunyan's Life. In the little village of Elstow in Bedfordshire there dwelt a man named Thomas Bunyan, who was a brazier, or mender of pans and small metal-ware. When his son John was born in 1628 the boy was brought up to follow the same ignoble trade. Young Bunyan had only the briefest of schooling and was not especially devout during his boyhood. He was apparently more interested in ballads and old romances at that time than in the Bible. When Bunyan was sixteen, his father, who had become a widower, married again. Bunyan resented his father's action and enlisted as a soldier in the Civil War, but he served only a short time. At twenty Bunyan married, though he and his wife were quite without means



John Bunyan

His wife, however, was influential in urging him to lead a godly life and to read pious books. Bunyan became very religious and looked back with horror upon what he regarded as his wicked youth, though his offenses had probably been of a trivial character. His conscience troubled him sorely until he joined the church. A few years later he became a wandering preacher and exhorted people fervently to give up their sinful ways. His faithful wife died about the same time, leaving in his care four young children, one of whom was blind. He continued in his religious work until 1660 when, shortly after the Restoration, he was arrested for preaching without sanction. He was taken to Bedford jail where he was confined until 1672, when Charles II suspended all penal statutes against Dissenters. After gaining his freedom he devoted himself entirely to preaching and to the writing of religious books. The authorities did not molest him much during his later life, except for his arrest in 1675, when he spent another six months in Bedford jail. It was during this second imprisonment that he was supposed to have written a portion of *Pilgrim's Progress*, but there is no evidence that this great work was really written in jail. At times he preached in London to large groups of persons, but he preferred to work among his own people in Bedford. He died in 1688 and was buried in Bunhill Fields, London.

8. Literary Work. In spite of his meager schooling, Bunyan wrote some sixty works, mostly of a religious character. His masterpiece is *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), which was translated into almost every language of the globe and achieved a popularity second only to the Bible. In *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) Bunyan presented a character who was the exact opposite of his hero in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Mr. Wiseman relates to Mr. Attentive how Mr. Badman followed the easy road to perdition. It is a vivid picture of contemporary manners and anticipates the convincing realism of DeFoe's stories. Bunyan also

wrote *The Holy War* (1682), which represents the soul as besieged and withstanding the forces of evil. A second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, telling how Christian's wife Christiana journeyed with her children to the Celestial City, appeared in 1684.

9. Pilgrim's Progress. There is probably no more fascinating story in religious literature than that of Christian's perilous journey from the City of Destruction to the Kingdom of Everlasting Life—an allegory so obvious that any child can understand and enjoy it. Yet Bunyan himself would have grieved at the thought that posterity would regard his book as entertaining. He wrote with singleness of purpose to point out the one hard road to salvation amid the many besetting perils and temptations that might lure the pilgrim from the true path. Had Bunyan been a man of scholarly training he might have succeeded in making his book so insufferably dull that it would have passed quietly



Bunyan's Dream

into oblivion with the thousands of other uninspired works of that kind. His equipment for the task he undertook was ideal. He was a fervent, earnest spirit and he knew his Bible very well. He wrote as he spoke—the plain, racy, idiomatic English of his day. Bunyan had the instinctive art of the teller of good tales. His *Pilgrim's Progress* so

completely overshadows his other work that such stories as *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* have not yet received full credit for their significance in the development of English fiction.

POETRY OF THE PURITAN AGE

10. **John Donne (1573–1631).** Donne was an ingenious writer who had a varied career as freebooter, poet, pamphleteer, and preacher. He studied at Oxford, helped the Earl of Essex to loot the Spanish treasure ships, was imprisoned for marrying the daughter of Sir George More without her father's consent, and finally became dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. He is principally remembered as the leader of a group of so-called "metaphysical poets" who delighted in quaint conceits and far-fetched abstractions with which they interlarded their verse. For the rich emotional quality of Elizabethan poets Donne and his followers substituted a fantastic intellectual strain that was often extremely clever, yet failed to stir the feelings of most readers. In his desire to achieve novel effect Donne did not hesitate to describe the unity of two loving souls in these words:

Our two souls therefore, which are one
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two,
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th'other do.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

So wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th'other foot, obliquely run,
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

Some readers are attracted by such verse, as they enjoy being surprised at intervals by some unexpected twist of thought or expression.

11. Religious Poets. Somewhat later than Donne came three religious poets who attained fame in their day. **George Herbert** (1593–1633), by far the best of this group, was a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, and an Episcopal rector at Bemerton. His collection of verse called *The Temple* (1633) contains some lovely meditative poems expressing a deep and sincere piety. Frequently, however, he followed the questionable example of Donne in writing the most eccentric conceits into his poems. At his best he gave us such beautiful poetry as this:

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
 But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
 Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lack'd anything.

He is far less admirable when he resorts to silly conceits, as in his poem *Paradise*, where in each of the five stanzas the final word of each verse is the final word of the preceding verse with the initial letter omitted:

I bless Thee, Lord, because I GROW
 Among thy trees, which in a ROW
 To Thee both fruit and order OW.

What open force or hidden CHARM
 Can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM
 While the enclosure is Thine ARM?

Henry Vaughan (1622–1695), a Welsh physician who was graduated at Jesus College, Oxford, was strongly influenced by Herbert and seemed to be at his best in the spiritual interpretation of nature, in which he occasionally anticipated the mood of Wordsworth. **Richard Crashaw** (1612?–1649)

was a Cambridge graduate who became a Roman Catholic and who produced some remarkable mystical poems. He came directly under the influence of Donne and, like Herbert, occasionally marred his verse by the intrusion of some labored conceit. In one of his poems he referred to the eyes of Mary Magdalene as

Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans.

12. The Caroline Poets. Among the poets who wrote during the reign of Charles I and were therefore called the "Caroline Poets" was a group who sympathized with the Royalist party or Cavaliers. Instead of reflecting the Puritan austerity of the age, their verse reveals a very different source of inspiration. They sang mostly of the beauty of life and youth, and the transitoriness of much that is pleasing in this world; they urged their readers to make the most of whatever joy came their way and to let the morrow take care of itself. Among these Cavalier lyrists was **Robert Herrick** (1591-1634), at once a pagan and a country parson, who wrote a vast number of short poems which he collected under the title *Hesperides* (1633). Towards the close of his long life he repented of his early frivolity and produced a volume of commendable sacred verse entitled *Noble Numbers*. We have pathetic record of this unhappy bachelor, dwelling in a dull Devonshire parish with his remarkable array of live stock; his cat, his spaniel, his lamb, his goose, his hen that faithfully laid an egg every day, and most remarkable of all, his learned pig that joined him in drinking beer out of his own tankard. Herrick is at his best in what he calls his "wild unbaptized rhymes" in voicing such sentiments as

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may:
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying,

or in this variation of the same thought:

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time!
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.

In his less joyous moments of repentance he wrote:

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

Thomas Carew (1598?-1639?) was the author of several exquisite lyrics dealing with youth and love, but little is known of his career. In his happier moments he sang in this strain:

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose,
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

At other times he did not hesitate to follow the bad example of Donne:

No more the frost
Candies the grass, or casts an icy cream
Upon the silver lake or crystal stream.

Sir John Suckling (1609-1642) was a Cambridge man who led a wild life as wit and courtier, and who finally committed suicide in Paris. He wrote several unimportant plays, but is best remembered for his songs, especially his *Ballad on a Wedding* and the lyric beginning "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" Richard Lovelace (1618-1658) was an Oxford graduate and for a time in favor at Court. By many he was accounted the handsomest man of his time. His devotion to the Royalist cause resulted in his imprisonment and his death in extreme poverty at the early age of forty. He has an assured place in the hearts of all lovers

of good poetry because of his two songs, *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars* and *To Althea, from Prison*. In the first we find the immortal couplet:

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

In the second is the equally famous passage:

Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage.

The Cavalier Poets wrote for the most part in trivial vein concerning the delights of spring, the beauty of their adored sweethearts, or the pleasures of the flowing bowl. Their poetry was in sharp contrast with the lofty utterance of the one great Puritan poet of that age, whose life and works both repudiated the selfish doctrine that makes pleasure the chief aim of existence.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

13. Youth and Education. During Shakespeare's later years in London he probably traversed very often on his walks between his lodging and the Globe Theater a narrow thoroughfare in Cheapside called Bread Street, where lived a scrivener or notary named John Milton. This Milton was an Oxfordshire man who had settled in London and had prospered there. He took an interest in literature and music, and composed several song-tunes. His wife, Sarah Jeffreys, was a refined woman of good social position and much interested in charitable work among the poor. The third of their six children was born on December 9, 1608 and was named John after the father. Everything was done to give the youth the best education that the day afforded. He attended St. Paul's School near his home and had likewise a private tutor. He learned music and modern lan-

guages as well as the classics. At the age of sixteen he entered Christ College, Cambridge, and soon won repute as a zealous, capable student. Even in his college days he entertained the noble ambition of writing a "work which the world will not willingly let die." He was still at college in 1629, when he began his majestic ode, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, the first of the fine lyrical poems that he produced during his early literary period. At the university Milton was called "the lady of Christ's" because of his almost feminine beauty of countenance and his purity of character. He spent seven years at Cambridge, taking both the B.A. and M.A. degrees. Thus he enjoyed the scholarly associations of his college until he was nearly twenty-four.



John Milton

14. The First Period (1632–1638). After leaving Cambridge Milton was still undecided as to his career. He did not care for law, and the church was likewise lacking in attraction. The years from 1632 to 1638 were spent at Horton, his father's beautiful country place near the Thames, not far from Windsor. There he lived in ideal detachment from the busy world, reading the classics and wandering about the region. Although these years at Cambridge and Horton were important in the shaping of his character, Milton himself felt that he was not using his time to best

advantage. The sonnet which he wrote on his twenty-third birthday voices his dissatisfaction:

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
 Stol'n on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
 My hasting days fly on with full career,
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
 That I to manhood am arrived so near,
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 Than some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
 Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
 It shall be still in strictest measure even
 To that same lot, however mean or high,
 Tow'rd which time leads me, and the will of heaven;
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great task-master's eye.

Yet he spent the six ensuing years in the meditative, retired life, unconsciously strengthening his spirit for the tempestuous days that were to come later. During this period he wrote the beautiful companion poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, which have always been greatly admired as contrasted poetic studies of the cheerful man and the contemplative man. They have been interpreted as pictures of the sharply distinct sides of Milton's own character; his natural and deep-seated joy in the beauty of the world, and his noble conception of the intellectual and spiritual existence.

In 1634, when the Earl of Bridgewater became President of Wales, an invitation was sent to Milton to write a masque or entertainment in which the Earl's three children, a daughter and two sons, might take part. He accordingly produced the charming masque *Comus*, which is the most ambitious of his earlier works. There is perhaps too much moralizing in this little play, but it endures because of its graceful imagery and the musical quality of its verse. About the simple story of three children lost in the woods Milton wove a pretty story showing the certain triumph of good

over evil. The lesson of the masque is conveyed in the final lines addressed to the audience:

Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb —
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

A sad accident occasioned the writing of *Lycidas* (1637), one of the greatest of English elegies. Milton's college friend, Edward King, had lost his life in a shipwreck on the Irish Sea. A group of Cambridge associates determined to publish a memorial volume in honor of their dead friend. Most of the contributors sent in Latin or Greek verses, but Milton, although he wrote Latin very well, fortunately chose to write in English. The poem is a pastoral allegory — a form with which Milton became familiar in his reading of such classic writers as Theocritus and Virgil. In it he rebukes the frivolity of so many of the poets of his day and departs from the course of his narrative to make a stinging attack on the selfish, mercenary clergy. Here we find the first marked evidence of the Puritanical spirit that became increasingly significant in his later work. In addition to these so-called Minor Poems (though the name should never be regarded as reflecting upon their merit) Milton wrote some of the most beautiful sonnets in the language. He ranks among the few great English masters of that difficult verse-form.

15. The Second Period (1638–1660). In 1638 Milton set out for an extended tour of western Europe. Continental travel, especially in France and Italy, was in those days accounted part of every gentleman's training. Milton first visited Paris, where the English ambassador introduced him to Hugo Grotius, the famous Dutch jurist. Then he proceeded to Pisa and Florence, where he was welcomed by

the foremost scholars of the age. He had intended to continue his travels to Greece, but hearing rumors of the impending political upheaval at home, he returned to England and devoted himself zealously to the Puritan cause. During the twenty years between 1640 and 1660 he wrote many important pamphlets in English and in Latin. Some of these dealt with religious freedom, with education, and with divorce. His most famous prose work, *Areopagitica* (1644), was a strong demand for freedom of the press. In 1643 Milton had married Mary Powell, a girl of seventeen who had been brought up in the gay atmosphere of a Cavalier family and who was therefore hardly to be looked upon as a congenial wife for an austere Puritan whose age was more than twice her own. The marriage was unhappy and for a time they separated, but two years later they became reconciled. It was during the period of their separation that Milton wrote a series of pamphlets on divorce.

After the execution of Charles I in 1649, Milton was chosen Foreign Secretary under the Commonwealth government and not only conducted his affairs ably in that office, but also found time to write vigorously in defense of Cromwell and the Puritan cause. A Dutch scholar named Salmasius had been instigated by Charles II, then living in exile on the Continent, to write an attack on the Commonwealth in a Latin tractate entitled *Defensio Regia*. The English government looked to Milton to prepare an adequate reply. He did so in 1651 in another Latin pamphlet named *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*. This great effort was undertaken and carried out by Milton in full realization of the fact that the extensive reading and study involved in the task would cost him his eye-sight. In fact, the vision of his left eye was gone before he published his reply to Salmasius.

In 1652, at the age of forty-three, he became totally blind. It is impossible for us to read to-day the pathetic *Sonnet*



Painting by Munkacsy Milton Dictating Paradise Lost to his Daughters

on *His Blindness* or the apostrophe to light in the first fifty lines of Book III of *Paradise Lost* without realizing to some degree what blindness meant to this gifted scholar in the full flush of his mature manhood, at a time when he was best equipped intellectually to serve the great cause that was nearest his heart. A year later his wife died, leaving to his care three young daughters. In 1656 Milton married Katharine Woodcock, but his second wife died little more than a year after their marriage. During the seven years that followed her death Milton trained his daughters to read to him in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, as well as in several modern languages. They did not understand what they were reading, but their blind father read through their eyes. Amid all the suffering and distress of that period we find no whining plaint coming from the great poet, but a noble resignation to the decrees of a higher power. He was able to continue his work as Foreign Secretary by the aid of assistants and continued to hold that post until the Restoration in 1660.

16. The Third Period (1660-1674). The return of Charles II was doubtless hailed with acclaim by the majority of Englishmen of that day who were disgusted with the inefficiency of the government after the death of Oliver Cromwell. To Milton, however, the Restoration was like the last bitter blow in his heavy misfortunes. Although Charles II had shown a gracious disposition at the outset of his return, he soon inflicted severe punishment upon all who had been actively opposed to the Royalists. Milton's friends managed to keep him under cover until the worst was over, but even then he was arrested and imprisoned for a short time. When he was released, the authorities confiscated much of his meager property. It is probable that the King would have insisted upon sterner measures if he had not been impressed by the tragedy of Milton's situation. The one comfort that came to Milton during the dark days

following the Restoration was his marriage in 1663 to his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, who was a capable woman and devoted herself to looking after his welfare. Milton did not lose heart over the sad change in his fortunes. As a youth he had considered the subject of King Arthur and his knights as a suitable theme for the great poem he hoped to write. Later he turned with more confidence to the story of the creation and the fall of man.

His great epic, *Paradise Lost*, was begun in 1658 and completed in 1665. It was not printed, however, until 1667. For this masterpiece of exalted religious verse — considered by many the finest epic poem in the language — he received only £10. In spite of this slight financial return, Milton probably felt satisfied at the thought that his great work was to see the light of day in printed form. No doubt his physical affliction helped to impart a certain spiritual dignity to the epic. As a blind and broken man, Milton was living apart from the hubbub and the brilliancy that marked the earlier years of the Restoration. He was literally detached from his age. Perhaps it was well that he no longer saw with physical eyes the world about him, but rejoiced in a spiritual vision of the world in the days of its infancy and of the innocence of mankind.

In its original form *Paradise Lost* was arranged in ten books, but it was later (1674) recast into the traditional twelve books. The poem opens with an invocation to the Heavenly Muse to sing

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.

The poem then describes Satan and his defeated legions lying in confusion in the utter darkness of Chaos. Satan addresses his followers and holds out to them a hope of

regaining Heaven. The infernal peers hold council in Pandemonium, the palace of Satan. Rather than risk another battle to recover Heaven, they agree to let Satan learn the truth as to a new world and a new order of creature, which, according to rumor, were about to come into being. Satan reaches the Garden of Eden, and beholds Adam and Eve in a state of innocence. He learns that they were forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. Satan enters into the Serpent and tempts Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. When Adam learns of her offense, he is at first amazed, but his love for her impels him to do likewise and share her fate. Satan returns to Pandemonium, boasting of his success. The Son of God intercedes for our first parents, but God declares they must no longer abide in Paradise. Submissively they are led out by the Angel Michael while the flaming sword waves over the scene of the happiness that they have forfeited.

It is true that *Paradise Lost* no longer appeals to a large group of readers; even students of literature are likely to read only two or three books of the epic. Few poems of such length and such character can achieve the sustained excellence that is essential to their continued popularity. Here and there, especially in the later books, the poem grows monotonous at times and stresses too much a stern, outworn theology which the world has left behind. Nevertheless we may find in this poem some of the sublimest passages in literature, unequaled for sonority and cadence, rich in imaginative and picturesque quality. Whether widely read or not, it is indeed a poem that the world will not willingly let die.

17. Later Poetical Work. Four years later (1671) appeared another epic, *Paradise Regained*, in four books and about 2000 lines, treating the subject of Christ's temptation and the redemption of man. Thus it completes the theme suggested by *Paradise Lost*. Critics differ in their

estimates of the two poems, but most authorities regard *Paradise Regained* as inferior to *Paradise Lost* in majesty of conception as well as in the musical quality of the verse. In the same year Milton brought out his *Samson Agonistes*, a dramatic poem modeled after the fashion of ancient Greek tragedy. He depicts the distress of Samson, blind, stripped of his glory and shorn of his strength, a prisoner among the Philistines. It is easy to read much of the tragedy of Milton's own later life into the lines of that noble drama, which gives a good idea of the form and spirit of classical tragedy. It was the last great utterance from a poet who had known many changes of fortune in his time, and who spoke from the bitterness of his heart in the midst of the evil days upon which he had fallen. His declining years were spent quietly at his home in London, where he died November 8, 1674. He was buried in St. Giles Chapel, Cripplegate, London.

18. Characteristics of Milton's Poetry.

Although the range of Milton's poetic work is comparatively narrow

and reveals a literary genius held in restraint by traditions that influenced all Puritan poets, few will question his right to rank next to Shakespeare among our great writers. It may be admitted that the gap between them is wide; Milton had little sense of humor, and he lacked that intimate sym-



Drawing by Doré

Paradise Lost

pathy with all sorts and conditions of humanity that characterized Shakespeare. In spite of his liberal education and the advantages offered by continental travel and association with the most distinguished men of his day, Milton was unable to escape the effects of a rigorous system of spiritual discipline which he had forced upon himself and which served as a standard in determining his estimate of others. At the same time his verse reveals a stern beauty and a majestic loftiness of tone unparalleled in our literature. His work is usually classic in spirit and musical in quality. He is most highly esteemed for the sublimity of his imagery in the great epic of the fall of man and for the dignity with which he treated every theme upon which he essayed to write. Few poets were more conscious of a divinely ordained mission than Milton. From his youth he appeared to consider himself as one consecrated to a great cause; all his studies and earlier poetic flights were merely preliminary to the coming day when he should "assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man."

19. The Influence of Milton. It is a notable fact that Milton's great epic was published at a period when English morality was at its lowest point — in the decade following the Restoration of Charles II. Comparatively few copies of *Paradise Lost* were bought immediately after its publication. Circumstances seemed to weigh heavily against the work, yet Milton exerted a profound influence upon the theology of his own and later days. There was much detail in his graphic narrative that was not to be found in the Biblical account of the fall of man. Milton enlarged upon the story as he found it, and his conception of the first parents, of the fallen angels, and of the expulsion from Eden was reflected in theological opinion long after his time. In most of his work, whether poetry or prose, there is evidence of exalted ideals and seriousness of purpose — characteristics that explain his significance to intellectual readers. He

would never appeal to the varied audience that recognizes the genius manifested in Shakespeare's sympathetic interpretation of humanity, but he holds a high place in the regard of those who meditate upon the life of the spirit, and who labor for the moral regeneration of mankind.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESTORATION

1. **Change of Ideals.** Human society shows a disposition to swing from one extreme to another. An age of expansion and license is likely to be followed by one of repression and austerity. After the overthrow of the Royalists by so



St. Paul's Cathedral

powerful a leader as Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan tradition was forced upon England and prevailed until the Protector's death in 1658. By that time England was beginning to chafe under the strictness of Puritan rule, which meant not only the stern morality of a Milton, but also the fanaticism of a Praise God Barebones and his kind. In some quarters Puritanism had become so rigid that any art or pastime that gave pleasure, no matter how innocent, was regarded with suspicion. Dancing under the May-pole and

wearing light-colored clothes were condemned as vehemently as bear-baiting and cock-fighting. A reaction set in that exerted a most significant influence on literature. The courtiers who came to England in 1660 in the train of Charles II

seemed to take delight in shocking and satirizing the sober-minded Puritans. The King set the fashion by leading a frivolous and dissolute life; the men and women about him naturally followed his example. Under the "merry monarch," as he was called, England no longer practiced what the Puritans preached. The court soon gained the reputation of being the most profligate in Europe. With cynical contempt Charles II played off one party against another and cared little what they did, so long as they made no attempt to interfere with his pleasures. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the corruption of the court extended to all ranks of society. The lower classes were fundamentally sound and uninfluenced by the vices of the nobility and gentry. While Charles and his dissipated associates were misruling England, Bunyan and men like him were preaching to the common people in London and elsewhere, and Milton was composing his masterful epics upholding the sanctity of the Divine Law.

2. New Influences. Charles II had spent most of his exile in France and had become familiar with the life of the French court, where his uncle Louis XIV, usually called the "Grand Monarch," was at that time on the throne. The reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715) was one of the longest and most remarkable in European history. During that brilliant Augustan Age in France, art, literature, and science flourished as never before. It was the age of Pascal, Corneille, Racine, and Molière. The splendor of monarchical rule reached its height under the king who declared, *L'état, c'est moi* (I am the state). Charles II had been much impressed by what he had seen during his exile in France and was willing to curry favor with the absolute monarch who had a full treasury, a powerful army, and no parliamentary body of any sort to hamper his will. Charles accepted large sums of money from Louis XIV, with whom he intrigued against his own Parliament. After a reckless, discreditable reign of twenty-

five years, replete with civil strife, Charles died in 1685 and was succeeded by his brother James II, who was still less satisfactory to the people. When James II was driven from the throne by the Revolution of 1688, the crown passed to his daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange. They ruled jointly as William and Mary. England's policy now shifted to friendly relations with the Dutch and intermittent wars with France.

3. Classicism. As France furnished the model upon which the affairs of the English court were conducted during the Restoration, so French writers provided the literary models most closely followed by the English authors of the period. The French poets and dramatists of that age were noted for their strict adherence to certain rules regarded as essential for all literary work that was held worthy of serious consideration. Under the influence of Boileau, the leading French critic of the day, they established the principle of "art by rule." They did not read classic literature as did the writers of the Renaissance period, to stimulate the imagination, but were content to regard the classics as perfect in literary form and therefore worthy of the closest imitation. Classicism as developed in England meant conformity to accepted models and standards by which all new works were judged. In its reverence for literary authority it became intolerant of all opinions that did not agree with its own ideals. For the free play of passion and imagination that prevailed during the Elizabethan Age it substituted a code that was upheld by three generations of literary men who dominated intellectual England for more than a century after the Restoration. Under the successive leadership of John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Samuel Johnson, the classicists maintained a remarkable literary autocracy that set the standards of subject-matter and form for all writers who produced literature during that period. In place of the shorter lyric measures that had been used by earlier poets,

the classical authors preferred to write long satires or versified essays and epistles. Much of their poetry lacked originality and emotional quality. It was largely didactic material, put forth in polished, versified form.

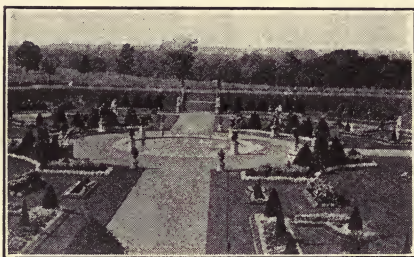
4. The Classical Couplet. In English poetry the most evident result of classical influence was the domination of one accepted poetic measure to the disadvantage of the varied meters that had been developed during the Renaissance and Elizabethan periods. The sonnet and the Spenserian stanza were frowned upon as lacking classical authority. The ode and similar forms based upon Greek or Latin models were accepted as correct for English practice, but the most popular meter was the so-called classical couplet — the use of iambic pentameter lines rhyming in pairs and with a distinct rhetorical pause at the end of each pair of verses. This metrical form was first used by Edmund Waller (1606–1687), who is really better remembered for his charming lyrics, *Go, Lovely Rose* and *On a Girdle*, than for such rigid classical couplets as these, descriptive of the Bermudas, which he never visited:

Such is the mould that the blest tenant feeds
On precious fruits, and pays his rent in weeds;
With candied plaintain, and the juicy pine,
On choicest melons and sweet grapes they dine.

Waller was not a poet of importance, but he deserves mention because he introduced the form of verse that was skilfully developed by Dryden and brought to its highest stage of perfection by Pope. In their hands the classical couplet became a nicely turned expression of a single thought, easily remembered and convenient for quotation.

5. Attitude toward Nature. Under the new order of things literature became a mere diversion for the small group that belonged to the world of fashion. It developed a spirit that was eminently practical and based on what

we like to call "common sense." It frowned on the fairy-tales of Old England and the host of legends about ghosts, witches, and elves. It regarded the romances of earlier ages as crude and inartistic. There was careful avoidance of everything that might be considered as questionable in taste. Nature was interesting only as reformed and "improved" by man. There was no symmetry in nature—and symmetry was essential to art. Therefore a well-graded lawn or a park carefully laid out with regular walks



Garden of Windsor Castle

and avenues would command admiration; but a mountain gorge, a precipice, or a natural waterfall would be considered rough and uninteresting. When Englishmen of that period traveled on

the Continent, they complained of the nuisance of crossing the Alps in order to reach the fair plains of Italy. That the Alps might attract favorable attention on their own account was not considered. The love for the artificial, as representing the handiwork of man, reached the point of preferring a certain artificiality of vocabulary to the natural speech of an earlier age. The old English ballads voiced the sentiment:

It is merry, walking in the fair forest
To hear the small birds' song

but Alexander Pope rendered it:

Hear how the birds, on every blooming spray,
With joyous music wake the dawning day!

Contrast the vigorous directness of Shakespeare's

Kings and mightiest potentates must die
For that's the end of human misery

with Dryden's studied and polished version of the thought:

All human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey.

Such quotations aptly illustrate the difference between nature and art — between the spirit of the Renaissance and that of the Restoration.

6. Samuel Butler (1612–1680) was a satirist whose reputation rests upon a single work, carelessly and hastily thrown together. He was for a time steward of Ludlow Castle, where Milton's *Comus* had been produced. During the Protectorate he was employed by a very strict Puritan nobleman whose narrow views probably inspired much of the ridicule that found its way into the poem *Hudibras*, which was published in 1663. It relates the adventures of an eccentric justice, Sir Hudibras, and his squire Ralph, who set out to suppress all popular merriment and diversion. The model was clearly Cervantes' great Spanish romance, *Don Quixote*, but the form was a crude couplet of four accents to the verse. It may be illustrated by this description of the hero:

He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skill'd in Analytic;
He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and southwest side;
On either hand he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute;
He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a Lord may be an owl.

Hudibras became extremely popular among the Royalists, including Charles II and his courtiers. A second and a third part of the poem were brought out in 1664 and 1668 in response to the wide demand. Although the work made no pretension to literary merit, it is of great interest because

of its occasional cleverness and its caustic, satirical picture of the age.

7. The Diarists. Both of the leading diarists of English literature flourished during the Restoration and preserved many significant bits of history during that period. John Evelyn (1620–1706) produced in his *Sylva* and *Terra* the first important books in our language on forestry and agriculture, but he is remembered chiefly for his *Diary*, which covers the period 1641–1706 and gives intimate pictures of the social life of his day.

Jan. 30, 1661. This day (O the stupendous and inscrutable judgments of God!) were the carcasses of those arch-rebels, Cromwell, Bradshaw, the Judge who condemned his Majesty, and Ireton, son-in-law to the Usurper, dragged out of their superb tombs in Westminster among the Kings, to Tyburn, and hanged on the gallows there from 9 in the morning till 6 at night, and then buried under that fatal and ignominious monument in a deep pit; thousands of people who had seen them in all their pride being spectators.

June 16, 1670. I went with some friends to the Bear Garden, where was cock-fighting, dog-fighting, bear and bull baiting, it being a famous day for all these butcherly sports, or rather barbarous cruelties. . . . One of the bulls tossed a dog full into a lady's lap, as she sate in one of the boxes at a considerable height from the arena. Two poor dogs were killed, and so all ended with the ape on horseback, and I most heartily weary of the rude and dirty pastime, which I had not seen, I think, in twenty years before.

Many of the entries are dull and insignificant, but occasionally we come across a human touch, as in "This day I paid my debts to a farthing, O blessed day."

Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), whose name is pronounced *peps* or *peeps*, was a clerk in the Navy Board and later a secretary of the Admiralty. His entertaining *Diary* covers the short period 1660–1669, but is an unusually complete record of his experiences and impressions. He included everything from the quaint details of his own domestic life

to the most important events at Court and in society. For his own protection he kept the *Diary* in a shorthand code of his own devising. It was not deciphered and published until 1825. The following extracts will afford some idea of the variety and charm of this very human document:

Feb. 1, 1660. In the morning went to my office where afterwards the old man brought me my letters from the carrier. At noon I went home and dined with my wife on pease porridge and nothing else. . . .

May 23, 1660. All the afternoon the King walked here and there, up and down (quite contrary to what I thought him to have been) very active and stirring. Upon the quarter-deck he fell into discourse of his escape from Worcester, where it made me ready to weep to hear the stories that he told of his difficulties that he had passed through, as his travelling four days and three nights on foot, every step up to his knees in dirt, with nothing but a green coat and a pair of country breeches on, and a pair of country shoes that made him so sore all over his feet, that he could scarce stir.

Aug. 20, 1666. Up, and to Deptford by water, reading "Othello, Moore of Venice," which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read "The Adventures of Five Houres" it seems a mean thing.

In the midst of all sorts of reference to contemporary history, politics, and literature it is curious to note that Pepys does not make mention of John Milton. His *Diary* is far more interesting than Evelyn's, but both are of great value to the historian of the period.

8. Science and Philosophy. Amid the frivolity of the Restoration it is refreshing to note an increased interest in scientific learning and in philosophy. The Royal Society, incorporated in 1662 to encourage the study of the physical sciences, has been active ever since that time and has published many volumes of scholarly transactions embodying the investigations and discoveries made by its members. Robert Boyle (1627-1691), who was one of its founders, did extensive work in experimental science and is sometimes

regarded as the father of modern chemistry. The contributions of Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) to scientific knowledge are still more significant. Among the philosophers, John Locke (1632–1704) easily ranks first on the strength of a single great work, his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), which investigates the nature of the intellect and the origin of ideas. Such works as this and the earlier *Leviathan* (1651), written by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), belong to the realm of philosophy rather than to literature.

9. **The Restoration Drama.** When the theaters were reopened in 1660, England had been for eighteen years without public theatrical representations. The spirit of the new age was very different from that of the Elizabethan period. French influence brought in much cynical wit and open derision of conventional morality. The taste of the age was such that it regarded itself as far superior to the earlier epoch. Pepys' opinion of *Othello* has just been quoted. In 1662 he said of *Romeo and Juliet*, "a play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life." Later he described *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as "a most insipid ridiculous play," and *Twelfth Night* as "but a silly play." Voltaire, the distinguished French critic, admitted Shakespeare's genius, but added significantly that Shakespeare did not have a trace of good taste and no knowledge of rules. Among the few Restoration dramatists who essayed serious drama was Thomas Otway (1651–1685) who attended Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. His most successful plays were *The Orphan* (1680) and *Venice Preserved* (1682). There are impressive scenes in the latter play, but Otway is chiefly remembered to-day because of a somewhat untrustworthy story to the effect that he starved to death.

The most notable of the Restoration dramatists were William Wycherley (1640?–1716) and William Congreve (1670–1729). Wycherley wrote a few comedies, such as *The*

Country Wife and *The Plain Dealer*, which, in spite of their wit and dramatic construction, must be condemned as immoral and degrading. Congreve, who wrote about twenty years later, was a far better writer and more natural in his manner of developing a plot, but he does not escape the charge of catering to the low taste of his age. He wrote four comedies — *The Old Bachelor*, *The Double Dealer*, *Love for Love*, and *The Way of the World* — but only one tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, which is remembered because of its first line:

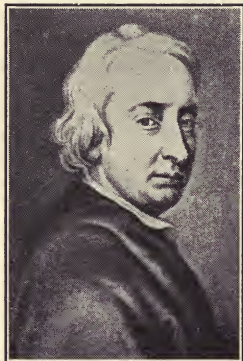
Music has charms to sooth a savage breast.

We should not take the vulgar comedies of the Restoration period as typical of the life of that age. They were written mainly for an audience whose taste had been depraved by undesirable models from abroad; they found their best support among those who were close to the Court or who aped its ways.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

10. Life and Early Works. John Dryden was born at Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, in 1631. His father was a justice of the peace and son of a baronet. As a boy Dryden attended the Westminster School under the famous flogging master, Dr. Busby, and no doubt had his share of the flogging. Later he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he developed into an earnest student who was especially well read in the classics. As his family were of Puritan stock and sympathized with the Puritan party, Dryden wrote his *Heroic Stanzas* (1658) on the death of Oliver Cromwell. His lack of political sincerity became apparent two years later when the Restoration placed Charles II on the throne. Dryden promptly aligned himself with the winning party by writing *Astraea Redux*, a flattering poem of welcome to the returning monarch. He married Lady

Elizabeth Howard in 1663 and became the father of three sons who assisted him in his literary labors toward the end of his life. In 1667 he achieved great popularity with his poem *Annus Mirabilis*, which recounted in stirring verse some of the leading events of the year 1666, such as the Great Fire of London and the Dutch War. Likewise in



John Dryden

1667 he brought out his first important critical treatise, his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, which was not only a most significant piece of literary criticism, but marked an epoch in the development of English prose style.

Lured by the prospect of large returns for his literary efforts, Dryden turned to the stage and undertook to provide three plays every year for the King's Theater. For almost two decades he continued to produce successful plays of every variety. He adapted Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* under the title *All for Love* and took similar liberties with *The Tempest*, but without changing its name. Most of his plays were trivial farces and satirical comedies of the kind that were most in demand. During this period Dryden came to be regarded as the leading literary man of London. He was made Poet Laureate in 1670 and afterwards received a profitable appointment as Collector of the Port of London.

11. Dryden's Satires. Dryden was about fifty years old when he gave up writing for the stage and devoted himself to the composition of important religious and political treatises in prose and in verse. In rapid succession he produced three remarkable satirical poems. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) was the first, and ranks as the most brilliant of all political satires. Under the guise of the familiar Old

Testament story, Dryden assailed the Earl of Shaftesbury (Achitophel) who was at that time imprisoned in the Tower of London awaiting trial for supporting the Duke of Monmouth (Absalom) as heir to the throne of Charles II (King David). The Duke of Buckingham figured as Zimri and Oliver Cromwell as Saul. London became Jerusalem, France became Egypt, and the King of France was therefore Pharoah. Dryden's remarkable skill in pen-portraiture was revealed in his description of Shaftesbury.

Of these the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages cursed:
For close designs and crooked counsel fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace.

The Duke of Buckingham fared no better.

A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.

The second satire, *The Medal* (1682), written at the suggestion of Charles II after the release of Shaftesbury from the Tower, was still more scathing in its language and is said to have hastened Shaftesbury's death. The last and shortest of the three poems was *MacFlecknoe* (1682), a piece of personal railery directed against a minor poet named Shadwell who had been foolish enough to attack Dryden for writing *The Medal*. Dryden regarded *MacFlecknoe* as the best of his poems. Poor Shadwell was immortalized in one unforgettable couplet:

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

The first of Dryden's important religious poems was *Religio Laici* (1682) or *Religion of a Layman*, which was a strong defense of the English Church, but within three years, when James II ascended the throne, Dryden forthwith turned Catholic and wrote another religious satire, *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), in which "a milk-white Hind immortal and unchanged" typified the Roman Catholic Church, while the Panther, represented as "the fairest creature of the spotted kind, too good to be a beast of prey," stood for the Anglican Church. In this satire Dryden was



Trinity College, Cambridge

bitter in his denunciation of other sects. The wolf stood for the Calvinists, the boar for the Anabaptists, the hare for the Quakers, and the ape for the infidels.

12. The Later Works. Dryden's quick shift of allegiance at the Restoration and his change of religion in 1685 gave rise to the accusation that he was always ready to go over to the victorious side. As a matter of fact, he clung to the Catholic Church in 1688 when James was driven from the throne. His refusal to acknowledge allegiance to the Protestant William III involved the loss of all his positions and the cutting off of his pensions. He was approaching old age,

but set to work with renewed energy to support himself by his pen. He wrote plays, poems, prefaces to books by others, and translations. His *Essay on Satire* appeared in 1693. Aided by his sons, he produced a complete translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (1697) and of extracts from Homer, Ovid, and Juvenal. One of his finest lyrical poems, *Alexander's Feast*, was composed in 1697 and is usually considered a better poem than the popular *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* which he had composed a decade earlier. Just before his death in 1700 he published his *Fables*, including poetical paraphrases from Ovid, Boccaccio, and Chaucer. During his later years he was an honored figure, ruling as a literary dictator at Will's Coffee House in London, and was looked upon with reverence by the younger writers of the day. He died in 1700 and was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

13. Significance of Dryden. Unquestionably Dryden is the outstanding literary man of the Restoration period. All the essential characteristics of classicism are reflected in his work. He covered a wide range of literary form with his poems, his dramas, and his literary essays; what is more, he wrote with distinct success in each of these forms. A man of talent rather than of genius, Dryden was above all representative of his age. Few men as versatile as Dryden have ranked higher in any form of literary achievement. As a satirist he stands in the very front rank, and his literary criticism is still highly esteemed. Although himself a classical scholar of attainment, he did much to free English prose from the involved Latin constructions that hampered it even in the writing of so late a master as Milton. Indeed, Dryden may fairly be considered the first of our prose writers whose style approximates that of the present time.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

1. An Age of Repression. Classicism reached its height during the period usually spoken of as the Age of Pope (1700–1744). The critical standards that had been established during the Restoration period were now generally accepted. Formalism was proclaimed as the keynote of good art. It is no exaggeration to say that form counted for more than substance. Every writer strove to observe recognized models and thus be in harmony with the pseudo-classical spirit of his age. A very self-satisfied age it was, quite conscious of its superiority to what had gone before and ready to accept the complacent dictum, *Whatever is, is right*.

The leading men of letters were all interested in politics, which was the one absorbing topic at all times. This was largely due to the significant historical developments during the first half of the eighteenth century. William III outlived his wife Mary until 1702, and after his death Mary's surviving sister, Queen Anne, ascended the throne. The new Queen was more noted for her virtue than her intelligence, but she was at least wise enough to intrust the direction of affairs to the great Marlborough. In a series of successful campaigns he won a commanding position for England and a dukedom for himself. Although the Queen and Marlborough both favored the Tories, that party lost control in 1708 to the Whigs, and the rest of the reign was a tense struggle for supremacy. Queen Anne died in 1714 and with her the line of Stuarts ended. The crown passed

to her cousin, the Elector of Hanover, who became George I (reigning 1714–1727), the first of the “Four Georges” who ruled in succession from 1714 to 1830. With the accession of George I the Tory power was completely broken until 1760, when George II died. Sir Robert Walpole, an accomplished though unscrupulous statesman, dominated the reigns of the first two Georges as Marlborough had dominated the preceding reign.

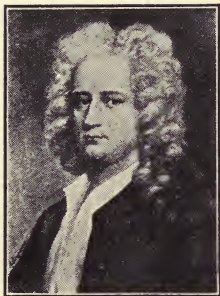
2. Character of the Period. During those years literature was still produced largely by those who enjoyed the patronage of the great. Nearly every writer sought the privilege of dedicating his books to some nobleman. While there was rapid advance in the development of the manufacturing and commercial classes, there was virtually no suggestion of the great social revolution that was impending. No widespread interest in the welfare of the dense masses of humanity had yet arisen. Social life centered about London and its suburbs. The gay wits of the day gathered at the coffee houses, of which there were about three thousand in London, and exchanged the gossip of the moment. Beneath the smooth surface of the social order there was much bribery and corruption. London sought to imitate the manner of Paris, but it was still a dirty, ill-paved city. At night bands of dissolute rioters called Mohawks infested the streets to the terror of respectable pedestrians.

The traditions of the age discouraged imagination in its literature and restrained any show of emotion. Such an age is necessarily intellectual and prosaic, whether its literature is written in prose or verse. The stage was cleaner than during the Restoration period, and literature in general showed a higher moral tone, but there was still much cynicism, flippancy, and occasional coarseness. The improvement in the drama was partly due to the vigorous protest of **Jeremy Collier** (1650–1726) who published his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* in

1698. As for the healthier tone of literature during this period, much of the credit belongs to the two friendly essayists whose names are always associated with each other — Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719)

3. Early Career. Addison was born in the Wiltshire village of Milston, where his father was rector. He was educated at Lichfield School and at Charterhouse, where he first met Steele. When he went to Oxford, he attended Queen's College and won a fellowship at Magdalen College. The beautiful shaded pathway near the latter college is



Joseph Addison

still known as "Addison's Walk." He was soon recognized as a distinguished classical scholar and produced Latin poetry that won favorable comment from Dryden. It was Addison's intention to enter the Church, but his friends persuaded him to prepare for the diplomatic service. They secured for him a pension of £300 which enabled him to travel extensively on the continent and gain the necessary experience. He lived in Paris for a

time, then made the tour of Italy, and visited Vienna. When William III died in 1702, Addison's pension ceased. It became necessary for him to return to England, where he secured employment as a tutor. He became a member of the famous Kit Cat Club, which assembled at "The Cat and the Fiddle" near Temple Bar, London, to talk politics and to eat the excellent mutton pies provided by the host, Christopher Cat. Addison's opportunity to attract public attention came in 1704, when he was commissioned to write a poem in honor of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. A great deal of inferior verse had been written about the

battle, and the ministry desired to have some one write a poem adequate to the occasion. The result was *The Campaign* (1705), which won for Addison an appointment as Under Secretary of State. In spite of its influence on the poet's fortunes, it was not, however, a work of much merit. One passage survives because of a picturesque simile descriptive of the confidence with which Marlborough dominated the battle:

So when an angel by divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene, he drives the furious blast;
And pleas'd th'Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

4. Later Life. Addison's pleasing personality won him favor in high places. He became secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and likewise served in Parliament from 1709 until the end of his life. During 1709-1711, when Sir Richard Steele was conducting *The Tatler*, Addison became a contributor and wrote over forty of its 271 essays. In 1711, two months after the cessation of *The Tatler*, he began the publication of *The Spectator* as a daily; later it appeared three times every week and ran to a total of 635 numbers. Other writers occasionally contributed a paper, but most of the essays were the work of Addison or Steele. The most interesting sketches in *The Spectator* were the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, dealing with the adventures of a fine type of country squire and his associates. One paper



Magdalen College, Oxford

deals with Sir Roger at church, others tell of him in town, at the play, or at Westminster Abbey. We learn of Sir Roger's views on sport, gypsies, and witchcraft. Finally, there is a pathetic account of his death. Steele had the honor of writing the first Sir Roger paper, but most of the others were by Addison. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were not newspapers, but periodical essays or editorials on subjects of current interest. They exerted considerable influence on public opinion and provided subjects for gossip at the coffee houses. These establishments in some respects resembled the clubs of a later period. There men like Addison and Steele soon won recognition as intellectual leaders and established a widespread reputation for the sagacity of their comment on current affairs.

Addison's tragedy of *Cato*, produced at Drury Lane in 1713, was regarded as a great play in his time. It was written in the approved classical style with due consideration for the unities, but we find it dull reading to-day. As a poet Addison was most successful in his hymns, some of which, such as "The spacious firmament on high" and his version of the Twenty-third Psalm, are still very popular. In addition to his contributions to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, he also wrote for various short-lived periodicals such as *The Guardian* and *The Lover*. In 1716 he married the Countess of Warwick and lived in her spacious London home, Holland House. He once more took an active interest in politics and in 1717 became Secretary of State; but his health broke down and he retired on a pension of £1500. He died in 1719, at the relatively early age of fifty-seven.

5. Addison's Style. Among those who knew Addison best he was regarded as a refined, courtly gentleman of high moral character who made friends everywhere. His associates marveled at the calm manner in which he dominated the oftentimes turbulent wits at Button's Coffee House. Swift said that the people would have elected Addison as

their King if he had sought the throne. His manner of writing was characteristic of the man himself. His poetry and his attempts at drama may be quickly dismissed. He was essentially a prose writer and has long been accepted as a great master of English style. He revealed those twin qualities — ease and elegance — so eagerly sought by his contemporaries. His prose is marked by a lightness of touch and a grace that is rare in earlier writers. We have not yet forgotten Dr. Samuel Johnson's famous remark that a man who wishes to attain "an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

6. **Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729).** Although Steele is so frequently mentioned in connection with Addison because of their schoolday friendship and their joint literary labors, he was a very different sort of man. Steele was born in Dublin, educated at Charterhouse and at Christ Church, Oxford, but left the University without a degree. He entered the army and achieved the rank of captain. His earliest literary efforts (after a devotional book called *The Christian Hero*) were plays, such as *The Funeral*, *The Lying Lover*, and *The Tender Husband*, but they were loosely put together. In moral tone they were far superior to the licentious drama of the Restoration. He was twice married and both times to women of some wealth, but his extravagant habits kept him continually in debt. Under the pseudonym Isaac



Sir Richard Steele

Bickerstaff he conducted *The Tatler* (1709–1711), which appeared three times a week, and he wrote about two-thirds of its 271 papers. He served as Commissioner of the Stamp Office and in Parliament. When Addison started *The Spectator*, Steele became a frequent contributor and wrote about 240 of the 635 essays. It is regrettable that in 1718 he became involved in a political quarrel with Addison, and each sharply attacked the other in print. Unfortunately they were still unreconciled at the time of Addison's death.



Christ Church, Oxford

During the later years of his erratic life Steele lived in Wales, where his enemies said he had fled to escape his numerous creditors. He died there in 1729.

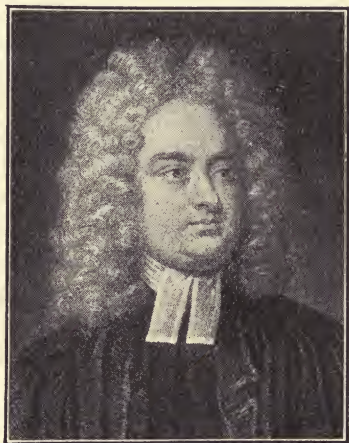
Steele, although possessing his share of human failings, was a more lovable man than Addison. Their contemporaries admired and respected Addison and

sought his friendship, but they rarely achieved real intimacy with him. Steele had a lively imagination, sincere sympathy for the afflicted, and a keen sense of humor. He belonged to the happy-go-lucky type of men, like Oliver Goldsmith, who throw off their troubles easily and let others do the worrying. His letters reveal a personality that was tender and amiable, but his faults must have made him a great care to those who were inclined to be his best friends.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745)

7. An Unhappy Youth. Swift was born in Dublin, 1667, of English descent. His father, who was a cousin of John

Dryden, died before Swift was born, leaving a widow in very poor circumstances. In spite of his great pride, Swift was compelled to accept help from relatives who had him educated at Kilkenny School and at Trinity College, Dublin. He did excellent work in the classics, but failed in theology and philosophy; as a result he received his degree by a special dispensation. After leaving college he went to England, where he served for nearly ten years as private secretary to his distant kinsman, Sir William Temple, who dwelt at Moor Park, in Surrey. Although he lived in the most pleasant surroundings, Swift chafed at his subservient position on a salary of £20 a year. After a quarrel with Temple he left in 1694, but he did not hesitate to ask Temple a year later to recommend him for holy orders. He secured an appointment to the small parish of Kilroot in Ireland, but soon grew impatient at his position and returned to Moor



Jonathan Swift

Park. There he had ample opportunity for study and evidently used his time to good advantage. He also acted as tutor for Esther Johnson, a girl who then lived at Moor Park, and who figured in his later life under the name of Stella. When Sir William Temple died in 1699, Swift returned to Ireland as chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley and held various church livings, including that of Laracor, a village about twenty miles from Dublin.

8. Early Satires. In 1704 he published a remarkable satire entitled *The Battle of the Books*, which had been written

seven years earlier. Sir William some time before his death had brought out an essay on the relative merits of ancient and modern learning, and had become hopelessly involved in literary controversy with the scholars of his age. Swift came to his rescue and incidentally revealed the remarkable range of his own reading. In the course of his argument in favor of ancient writers he compared the ancients to bees and the moderns to spiders. The ancients could therefore contend that

“instead of dirt and poison, we have chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light.”

It is interesting to note that this phrase, “sweetness and light,” of which Matthew Arnold made so much in his essays, should have originated with the most morbid pessimist in English literature. *The Tale of a Tub* (1704) was a religious satire in allegorical form. Three brothers named Peter (the Catholic Church), Martin (the Lutheran Church), and Jack (the Dissenting churches) are represented as quarreling over their father's will. In his eagerness to make effective satiric thrusts at each of the sects, Swift wrote with levity and in places was even grossly irreverent. This book, more than any other, stood in his way when Swift later sought preferment in the Church. Another satire that was doubtless harmful to his interests was his *Argument against Abolishing Christianity* (1708), in which he gave an instance of his ironical power at its best by taking the ground that Christianity had been abolished and offering some feeble arguments for its retention a little while longer.

9. A Literary Joke. Swift's fame as a humorist became widespread as a result of a prank played on a poor fellow named John Partridge, originally a shoemaker, who had turned to the writing of almanacs filled with the usual astrological forecasts. Swift, under the name of Isaac

Bickerstaff, Esq., published his *Predictions for the Year 1708*, in which, among other absurdities, he announced the prospective death of Partridge on the following 29th of March, about eleven at night, of a raging fever. Soon after that day he published another paper giving an amusing and detailed account of Partridge's last moments. Partridge indignantly protested to his customers that he was not dead at all;

Bickerstaff replied that Partridge must undoubtedly be dead by all the laws of astrology. Poor Partridge spent the remaining seven years of his life in a somewhat unsuccessful attempt to convince the former purchasers of his almanac that he was still alive. The name of Isaac Bickerstaff became so popular as a result of this joke that Steele adopted it in 1709 when he started *The Tatler*.



Trinity College, Dublin

10. **Stella and Politics.** Swift had become much attached to Stella and from 1710 to 1713 wrote to her his *Journal to Stella*, in which he revealed a tender aspect of his nature that would be unsuspected from reading his other works. As those letters were not intended for publication, he expressed himself freely concerning his experiences, his associates, and his ambitions. During those same years London knew him best as an arrogant political pamphleteer, conscious of his great gift of satire and insolent in his bearing toward friend and foe. The Tories encouraged Swift to expect a bishopric as a reward for his writings, but he secured only the deanery of St. Patrick's in Dublin. To Swift's bitter disappointment this necessitated his return to Ireland, where he continued to live for the remaining thirty years of his life. There is a tradition that he secretly married Stella in 1716, but the fact has never been established. In 1724

he championed the cause of Ireland in his *Drapier's Letters*, protesting against a debased coinage for Ireland, which was threatened by a privilege granted to an Englishman to coin copper half-pence there. His success in defeating the scheme made him a hero in the eyes of the Irish. He was, however, wretchedly unhappy in that country and often referred to it in contemptuous words.

11. Gulliver's Travels. The one work by which Swift is best remembered to-day is *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), the delight of young people who enjoy reading about Lilliput,



Painting by Redgrave

Gulliver in Brobdingnag

the land where grown human beings were less than six inches high, and about Brobdingnag, where men were giants sixty feet high and everything else was in proportion. The children do not understand that Swift had no intention of writing a book for their entertainment. Older persons

realize that it is one of the bitterest, most pessimistic satires ever written. It is really not a story about dwarfs and giants, but an allegory exposing the petty meanness and the glaring vices of the human race. He lashes mankind for its frailties and shortcomings, heaping ridicule on its philosophers, its inventors, and its scholars; and finally, in the half-mad frenzy of the concluding part of the book, he decides that horses are cleaner and more decent creatures than men. There is pungent wit and inexcusable coarseness in Swift's savage arraignment of humanity; also, unfortunately, there is no ray of hope for better things to come.

Swift's misanthropy was due to various causes. While

most other writers skimmed over the surface of contemporary life, or at most criticized with restrained irony, Swift delved into the depths and saw the social corruption at its worst. He felt that his own life was a failure, and he imagined the same was true of most persons. It is charitable to believe that part of his bitterness resulted from the gradually decaying mental vigor that marked his later years.

12. A Tragic End. Swift paid his last visit to England in 1727. The death of George I gave him some hope that he might receive political favor, but he was again disappointed. His dear friend Stella died in 1728 after a lingering illness, and Swift left among his shorter papers a sympathetic descriptive sketch which he wrote immediately after her death. Among his remarkable satirical pamphlets there was none in which his irony was more effectually employed than in his *Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country*. In apparent seriousness he proposed that the children be fattened and sold to the London meat-market. He estimated that Ireland could dispose of 100,000 youngsters annually at ten shillings each to the great profit of all concerned, and that a fat yearling child, roasted whole, would be much enjoyed at a Lord Mayor's banquet. Foreign authors who did not grasp the irony of Swift's pamphlet, quoted it seriously as an evidence of the distressing state of Ireland.

In addition to his prose works, Swift wrote considerable verse, but his experiments in meter are less important. Dryden once said to him, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet," and Dryden spoke with authority in such matters. A poem called *Cadenus and Vanessa* was addressed to Esther Vanhomrigh, with whom he was at one time very friendly, and who is said to have died of grief at the rumor of his marriage to Stella. In 1731 he chose the startling subject, *On the Death of Dr. Swift*, and wrote his own poetical obituary. His caustic style is revealed in these lines:

From Dublin soon to London spread,
'Tis told at court, "The dean is dead."
And Lady Suffolk in her spleen,
Runs laughing up to tell the Queen.
The Queen, so gracious, mild, and good,
Cries, "Is he gone! 'tis time he should.
He's dead, you say; then let him rot."

About 1738 the symptoms of his mental affliction became more apparent. His age knew little of the proper treatment for such cases and usually resorted to measures that soon brought the victim to the strait-jacket and the lunatic asylum. Swift had once observed a tree that had been struck and withered by lightning and had remarked, "I shall be like that tree. I shall die at the top first." On another occasion he wrote that he would die like a poisoned rat in a hole. He continued hopelessly insane until his death in 1745. He was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, by the side of his Stella. On his tomb were inscribed the words that he had chosen:

Ubi saeva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit
(Where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate the heart).

Much of his fortune was left to establish St. Patrick's Hospital for the insane.

There are few careers in literature more pathetic than Swift's. From the first he seemed to be at odds with the world and ready to devote his fine talents to satirizing his age and the men about him. His lampoons and his sneers made him a writer to be feared and hated, but such a reputation meant that much of his influence would die with him. Only the learned scholar, interested in the quarrels and the controversies of that age, will go deeply into Swift's writings; for the rest the great satirist is to-day merely the author of an entertaining story of an English traveler who visited the remarkable lands of Lilliput and Brobdingnag.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

13. A Precocious Youth. Alexander Pope was born in London in 1688, only a few months before the Catholic King, James II, was driven from the throne. His father, who had been a prosperous linen-dealer, was a devout Catholic and would not support the new Protestant King, William III. The elder Pope accordingly left London, taking with him a fortune of some £20,000, and settled in Binfield, near Windsor Forest, where he dwelt in quiet comfort and devoted himself to the training of his sickly, deformed son. Because of Pope's religion it was impossible for him to attend either Oxford or Cambridge at that time, so in spite of some elementary schooling, he was virtually a self-educated man. His frail body prevented his indulging in the boisterous pastimes so dear to growing boys, and he accordingly found solace in books and study. At the age of eleven he was once taken to Will's Coffee House where he caught a glimpse of the great Dryden. The next year he made his first serious attempts at poetry. As he later expressed it, with characteristic lack of modesty:



Alexander Pope

As yet a child, not yet a fool to fame
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

He developed a remarkable precocity that resulted in his writing at the age of seventeen a group of pastoral poems characterized by admirable metrical skill and maturity of thought. As he approached manhood his intellect became even more alert, but his dwarfed physique made him morbid

and sensitive. He became absurdly jealous of those who enjoyed good health, or who were robust and well-built.

14. *Essay on Criticism*. In 1711 Pope brought out his first important poem, his *Essay on Criticism*, in which he incorporated critical ideas borrowed from Horace and from the French critic Boileau. The terse epigrammatic style of the poem and the polished couplets soon made Pope the most widely discussed writer in London. In the *Essay on Criticism* we find such memorable lines as these:

“A little learning is a dangerous thing.”

“To err is human, to forgive divine.”

“For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

The fact that so many ill-informed persons regard these familiar quotations as passages from Shakespeare is in itself a fine tribute to the young poet.

Among the more notable couplets of the poem are the following:

“’Tis with our judgments as our watches; none
Go just alike yet each believes his own.”

“We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.”

“Words are like leaves, and where they most abound
Much fruit of sense beneath is seldom found.”

Perhaps the most widely quoted extract from the poem is:

In words as fashions the same rule will hold,
Alike fantastic if too new or old;
Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

The literary success attending the publication of the *Essay on Criticism* brought Pope into the best social circles in London. Doubtless he was much pleased with the nice things that Addison said about him in *The Spectator*, but in due time he lampooned Addison as he did the smaller fry.

15. The Rape of the Lock. Pope's poetical masterpiece was *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), a mock-heroic poem based on actual incidents. A certain Lord Petre had snipped a lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor. The lady's indignation over what his Lordship considered a trivial matter led to bitter feeling between their respective families. Pope composed his poem to bring about a reconciliation between the parties at odds and, although he failed to placate the injured beauty, succeeded in writing one of the most charming poems of the age. Even those critics who have little sympathy for the artificiality and glitter of its style accord it high praise as a picture of contemporary manners in high social circles. Note the fair Belinda at her toilet:



Drawing by Beardsley

The Rape of the Lock

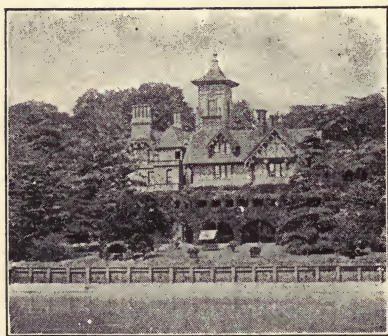
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
 The fair each moment rises in her charms,
 Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
 And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
 See by degrees a purer blush arise,
 And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.

Was ever rouge applied more delicately? Later in the day she has coffee at Hampton Court:

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
 The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
 On shining altars of Japan they raise
 The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
 From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
 While China's earth receives the smoking tide.

It is a shallow, contemptible kind of life that Pope describes, with its lap-dogs, its billets-doux, its pet parrots, its gossip, its puffs and patches, and its snuff-boxes, but the immediate success of this epic established him as the leading poet of the day.

16. The Translation of Homer. Although the *Essay on Criticism* and *The Rape of the Lock* assured Pope's literary supremacy, they added little to the author's income. He found it necessary to undertake a larger literary task that promised adequate financial return. Accordingly he de-



Pope's Villa at Twickenham

termined to translate Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into English classical couplets such as he could fashion more skilfully than any other poet. In view of his imperfect knowledge of Greek he wisely enlisted the assistance of several scholars, but even then he felt free to depart from the literal rendering of

the Greek text to record what he considered the spirit of Homer's intention rather than his precise words. In fact, it is likely that Pope felt quite capable of "improving" Homer by what he did. For this license he was much criticized by the classical scholars of his day. "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope," said Bentley, the eminent critic,

“but you must not call it Homer.” Posterity, however, has confirmed the immediate popular verdict that Pope’s Homer is one of the most spirited translations in literature. Although the *Iliad* appeared in 1720 and the *Odyssey* in 1725–1726, they are still widely read in preference to the literal translations since prepared by more scholarly but less brilliant authors. His profits of nearly £9000 on Homer must be reckoned as having a purchasing power of over three times as much as to-day. Needless to add, the lucky publishers made still larger profits, though Pope’s humble assistants, two University men named Elijah Broome and William Fenton, received only £760 between them. With his sudden access of wealth Pope purchased for himself a substantial annuity and a lovely villa at Twickenham on the Thames, a few miles west of London. There he indulged his fancy for landscape gardening and welcomed to his charming home the great group of literary men who were ready to burn incense at his shrine as literary dictator of the age.

17. **The Quarrelsome Years.** While he was engaged on his translation of Homer, Pope found time to prepare an edition of Shakespeare, which appeared in 1725. He had few qualifications for that scholarly task and his edition is accordingly of little value. Some of his enemies soon recognized that fact, and one Lewis Theobald, who knew far more about Shakespeare than Pope did, published a pamphlet which was very plainly entitled, *Shakespeare Restored; or, Specimens of Blunders Committed and Unamended in Pope’s Edition of this Poet*. Pope was not long in plotting his revenge against Theobald and his kind. Uncertain health and a frail physique had made Pope an irritable man. Throughout his life he needed a servant to dress him in the various rigid garments that incased his body when he sat erect or walked. As the years passed he developed those meaner traits of humanity—his trickery, his readiness to

lie if it served his purpose, his miserliness, his jealousy of other writers — that characterized his later life. In 1728 his hatred of his many enemies was voiced in a savage satire called *The Dunciad*, in which Theobald was represented enthroned as King of the Dunces and other men of letters were caustically lampooned. Those assailed by Pope naturally replied in similar vein and embittered him by jocose references to his physical deformity or his temperamental peculiarities. If his admirers called him “the little nightingale” or “the swan of the Thames,” there were also others who spoke of him as “the hunch-backed toad” or “the wicked wasp of Twickenham.” During his later years he wrote his philosophical and moral poems which, in spite of their considerable merit, are rather neglected to-day. His *Essay on Man* (1733), which sought to vindicate the Divine purpose in guiding the affairs of the world, was based on this thesis:

And spite of pride, in erring reason’s spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right..

If our hurried world is too busy nowadays to read this admirable summary of the philosophical attitude of that age, we should at least not forget that in this poem we are reminded that

The proper study of mankind is man
and that

An honest man’s the noblest work of God.

Pope’s *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1734) is a vigorous satire in which we find the same twitting of his literary enemies as in *The Dunciad*. The poem is especially notorious for its malicious attack on Addison under the name of Atticus, who was described as one accustomed to

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer.

What Pope said of Addison in those mean lines was untrue; but, as he well knew, it was near enough to the truth to accomplish its purpose. In 1743 he revised and extended *The Dunciad* to bring it up to date by including the many literary enemies whom he had made since 1728, and to en-throne Colley Cibber as a new King of Dulness in place of Theobald. Cibber, although a popular actor and dramatist, was not a poet of any ability, yet he had been made Poet Laureate and offered a shining mark for Pope's sharp wit. It is incredible to us that a man of Pope's intelligence should have felt it necessary to pay off petty scores against his various literary foes, most of whom were wretched Grub-Street writers. The life that had been "one long disease" came to an end in 1744. Pope was buried in the church at Twickenham.

18. The Significance of Pope. No other writer of the entire classical period handled the heroic couplet with such consummate skill as Pope. Having attained mastery of the form early in life, he employed it with lasting success for the expression of a wide range of subjects. To be sure, the ideas expressed are usually prosaic ideas. They represent no flight of the poet's imagination, no subtle thought proclaimed for the first time. They were for the most part the current philosophy of the age, more adroitly expressed than by any one before Pope. There were few phases of the life of his period that did not find reflection somewhere in his verse. Shakespeare alone gave a greater number of quotable lines to our literature. Pope was the first English writer of eminence who made the writing of poetry a profession. He had no great message for the world and showed no enthusiasm for high social ideals. He felt content to voice the spirit of a pseudo-classical age that was supremely satisfied with itself and that recognized in his writings its most perfect exponent. Later ages reversed the belief of the classicists that they represented the highest attainment.

of literary art, but in the realm of formal, artificial expression Pope remains the supreme master.

THE RISE OF THE NOVEL

19. Beginnings. The story of English fiction is a long one, really covering the entire range of literature from the days of *Beowulf*, the legendaries, the medieval romances, and the tales of adventure to the carefully wrought novel of the present day. Mankind is always interested in a good tale, well told, and will give attention whenever there is prospect of entertainment. The earliest stories were fanciful narratives of personal prowess or of knightly adventure in war or in tournament. During the age of Elizabeth a new sentimental theme was introduced in the romantic love-story, in which the adventures and misadventures of true lovers assumed more importance than the other elements of the tale. Such romances as Sidney's *Arcadia*, Lodge's *Rosalynde*, and Greene's *Pandosto* were all of that class. A new type of story that achieved popularity in Elizabeth's day was the picaresque tale, named after the Spanish *picaro*, meaning a rogue. These stories recounted the experiences of some rogue or rascal who was constantly playing tricks on other persons. Thomas Nash (1567-1601) introduced this form of fiction into England in 1594, when he wrote *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton*. There were few early writers who sought to write realistic stories in the sense that we understand realism to-day, but Thomas Deloney (1543?-1607?), who had wandered widely about England and had seen a great deal of life, wrote *The Gentle Craft*, a collection of short stories about shoemakers, and also *Jack of Newbery*, relating the experiences of a weaver. In these narratives the aim of the author was primarily to tell a story, not to depict human character.

During the seventeenth century there was a notable

development in the field of allegorical fiction. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was the best of these allegories, but it did not indicate the main course that English fiction was destined to take. Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640-1689), who wrote a great many short tales of adventure and intrigue, has been generally neglected because of the vulgarity evident in much of her work, but she deserves credit for writing in *Oroonoko* (published 1698) the first English story with a humane intention, in its exposure of the horrors of the African slave-trade. This story should likewise be accepted as a step forward in the direction of the novel as we now understand that literary form.

20. **New Elements.** Literary men like Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-1613) and John Earle (1601-1665) who practiced the art of writing "characters" contributed their share toward the development of English fiction. Usually these "characters" were delineations wrought in a single essay as a literary exercise, but in *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and elsewhere we find such "characters" continued from one paper to another and worked out with a detail that makes for distinctive personality, as in the case of Sir Roger de Coverley. In spite of the difficulties that beset Addison in gradually developing the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, he succeeded in making his country squire a most notable personality. Few novelists of later days have given us so lovable a figure as this fine old specimen of English knight-hood. Sir Roger was no less conspicuously important in his familiar rustic surroundings than he was quaintly out of place in his rambles about London, yet he was every inch a gentleman at all times. Although Addison did not write a novel, he had the honor of delineating one of the really memorable characters in the range of English fiction. The prose satire, brought to such a high stage of development by Swift, likewise showed a trend toward the novel, but in Swift's satires the question of character portrayal received

scant attention. It is clear that the tale of adventure, the romantic love-story, the "character," and the satire each contributed something toward the form that we call the novel, yet each in some respect fell short of that ideal. The novel required not merely a story, or a description of individuals, or satiric comment on life, but a realistic or romantic portrayal of existence, involving the development of character under the conditions described in the narrative.

In the stories written by Daniel DeFoe we find the nearest approach to the novel of later days. In DeFoe's works, however, the adventures or incidents are related for their own sake, whereas a true novel would treat such experiences in the light of their relation to a convincing portrayal of life and the development of personality. DeFoe's fiction lacked mainly the element of definite plot-construction and the delineation of the influence of the narrated events upon the persons concerned. Another point of difference between such stories as DeFoe's and the first regular novels by Richardson and Fielding is that of probability. DeFoe usually sought to interest his reader by relating unusual experiences and stressed the experiences; Richardson and Fielding narrated adventures that were happening daily in the lives of persons about them and stressed the characterization of the persons concerned. DeFoe's account of an English mariner cast away on a desert island is a story of adventure; but Richardson's account of the love-affair of an English servant-girl is a novel.

DANIEL DEFOE (1659?-1731)

21. An Erratic Career. DeFoe was born in London, either in 1659 or in 1661, and was the son of a butcher who gave his boy a fair education in the hope of making a minister of him. DeFoe, however, became in turn a commission-merchant, a soldier, a liveryman, a tile-maker, a bankrupt, a journalist, a secret agent of the government, an economist,

and a spy. According to one critic, he also became one of the greatest liars that ever lived. In the midst of his many other activities he showed an abiding interest in producing literature. One of his earliest literary efforts was his *Essay upon Projects* (1698) which gives a most remarkable series of suggestions, some very sensible and others exceedingly foolish. He discussed such diverse subjects as banks, highways, casualty insurance, pensions, military training, and education for women. Many of these topics were treated in an uncanny way that was a century or more ahead of his time. He attracted more attention, however, as a political pamphleteer. Among his productions in that field was his *Shortest Way with Dissenters* (1702), in which, although a Dissenter himself, he wrote in the person of an Anglican Tory that all Dissenters should be banished or hanged. The Tories were deceived at first and promptly indorsed his views. When they realized that he had been ridiculing them, they set up a hue and cry, offering £50 for his arrest. When they got him they placed him in the pillory, but the populace gave DeFoe a splendid ovation, bringing flowers to the pillory instead of the decayed fruit and vegetables with which pilloried wretches were usually pelted. Pope in *The Dunciad* wrote the line:

Earless on high; stood unabash'd De Foe

and thus perpetuated the mistake that DeFoe's ears had been cut off for his offense. His punishment included a



Daniel DeFoe

year's term in Newgate Prison, where, with characteristic enterprise, he conducted a *Review* that appeared three times a week until 1713, when it was suppressed by the Government. At that time DeFoe was condemned for treason, but pardoned. Two years later he was again in trouble — this time for libel; again he escaped punishment through influential friends. It seems incredible that DeFoe



Painting by Crowe

DeFoe in the Pillory

should have written the entire *Review* during the nine years of its existence — a total of over five thousand pages in addition to the eighty books and pamphlets produced by him during the same period.

22. Robinson Crusoe. DeFoe was sixty years old when he published his first fiction — the greatest of all his works — his immortal *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Few stories have ever made such a universal appeal to young and old, to the

cultured and the untutored. There was nothing new about the idea of a shipwrecked mariner stranded on a desert island, and DeFoe was under considerable obligation to Alexander Selkirk, who actually went through such a distressing experience; at the same time the incidents in *Robinson Crusoe* are related in so simple and vivid a manner that they at once impress the reader as genuine. A young person dipping for the first time into the book is carried away by the realistic account of Crusoe's voyages, his shipwreck, the discovery of the foot-print, and his experiences with the cannibals. The mature reader, however, is more impressed by the fine spirit of piety and benevolence with which the hero faces his unusual plight. Both feel the horror of Crusoe's solitude; for the time being they live with him through all his difficulties and note with absorbed attention every little detail that may serve to ease his burden. They search their own hearts and realize that never before



Map of Crusoe's Island

did they appreciate the blessings of social existence. Doubtless many of them for the first time experience a deep feeling of gratitude for the presence in their homes of those who are dear to them. *Robinson Crusoe* is one of those rare books that combine instruction with pleasure in a way that does not detract in the least from the charm of the story. The triumph of DeFoe's art lies in the fact that we quite forget the writer in our concern for Crusoe. Small wonder that the book attained such renown and exerted so profound an influence on continental literature. From that day to this *Robinson Crusoe* has maintained its position among the great classics of the world.

23. Other Works. With the keen instinct of the journalist, DeFoe did not fail to make the most of his popularity. In rapid succession he brought out a series of realistic tales on a variety of subjects. *Captain Singleton* (1720) is an account of African exploration, piracies, and adventure; *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720) is a stirring story of the Civil Wars in England, and reveals all the characteristics of a genuine military history; *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Colonel Jack* (1722) are realistic stories of criminal low life in which he probably incorporated some of the experiences that came to his attention during his own imprisonment in Newgate. Whenever he wrote of such persons, he was always interested in drawing a moral from the offender's career. Perhaps one of the most remarkable performances of his literary activity was his *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), in which he describes the desolation and horror of London during the terrible year 1665 with all the graphic detail of an eye-witness, yet DeFoe was a very young child when the Plague occurred. Here again his unusual talent for journalism enabled him to build up a picture that is as convincing as any historical document could be.

24. Later Years. Probably few men of his period passed through more varied experiences than DeFoe, yet he found time to write over 250 books and pamphlets, many of which have never been reprinted. His active brain kept him incessantly engaged in literary or political activity. Thirteen times he was rich and poor; he changed his politics half a dozen times, until neither party knew whether he was really with them or playing spy for the opposition. In the days of hardship and affliction he probably undertook political commissions that were not altogether to his credit, but his personal shortcomings should not obscure the fact that DeFoe was England's first great journalist and one of her most versatile writers. After many variations of fortune he died in 1731 and was buried in Bunhill Fields, London,

where John Bunyan also lies. In 1870 the boys and girls of England raised a fund to place a suitable monument over the grave of the man whom they will always remember with affection as "Author of *Robinson Crusoe*."

As a writer DeFoe early acquired the journalist's art of telling his story vividly and of emphasizing those details that give a suggestion of reality to the tale. He wrote hastily and for the most part carelessly, yet his racy, idiomatic prose has the homely appeal that always belongs to the language of everyday life. He was not only one of the first constructive writers in economics, but also the first author to popularize stories dealing with plain people in the lower walks of society. Few students have read any considerable part of the vast amount of his miscellaneous writing. Much of his work seems doomed to oblivion, but DeFoe will always rank high not merely as the forerunner of the first great novelists, but as the author of a notable work of fiction that has won a more enduring popularity than all their works taken together.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761)

25. The First English Novelist. Samuel Richardson was a prosperous printer and bookseller of London who attained the age of fifty before he became noted for his literary gifts. He was born in Derbyshire in 1689 and apprenticed to a stationer at the age of seventeen. Even as a mere youth he was employed by young women to conduct their love correspondence when they were unable to write their own letters, and thus he acquired much skill in devising the sentimental sort of letter that met with general approval in that age. When he set up as a printer on his own account, he was probably too busy to pursue the art, but years later, when a firm of publishers asked him to prepare a "ready letter-writer" for the use of untutored persons lacking the

ability of self-expression, Richardson conceived the idea of uniting his letters into a sort of continuous narrative to make their perusal more entertaining. The result was his novel *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded*, published in four volumes in 1740 and generally accepted as the first novel in the modern sense. Instead of taking his characters hastily from one adventure to another, Richardson adopted a rather leisurely method of treatment and spent most of his time in



Samuel Richardson

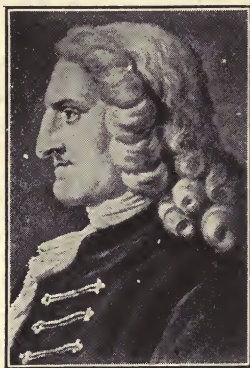
analyzing their traits to such an extent that they developed in personality as the story progressed. *Pamela* was the story of an English serving-maid who was strongly tempted by her employer, but who revealed such a virtuous character that he finally concluded to marry her. For the modern reader the story would be rather dull, with too obvious an attempt to point a moral whenever possible, but his own age showed genuine enthusiasm over the trials of

Pamela and demanded more literary fare of the same sort. The result was a still longer, though much better book, *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747-1748). The story was somewhat similar to *Pamela*, but ended in the pathetic death of *Clarissa* to the great regret of all who had followed her numerous experiences through the eight volumes that Richardson felt were necessary to tell the tale properly. In response to a request that he write a book depicting a hero with manly qualities quite as admirable as the feminine traits of his delightful heroines, Richardson undertook his third and last novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which is in seven good-sized volumes, but, on the whole, inferior to *Clarissa Harlowe*. All three

novels were written in the form of letters from one character to another. In spite of the manifest disadvantages of this method, it enabled Richardson to reveal his deep insight into human nature and his ability to give his readers precisely what they craved. There was mawkish sentimentality in most of his work and a tendency to dwell upon commonplace detail to the point of tediousness, but Richardson still has his readers among those to whom time is not an important consideration.

HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754)

26. A Great Realist. Fielding was born at Sharpham Park, Somersetshire, in 1707 and was educated at Eton College and the University of Leyden. He had a varied career as a writer of farces, a theater manager, a lawyer, and a judge in a London police court. His first novel, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), was the direct result of an attempt to parody Richardson's *Pamela*. His hero is represented as the brother of Pamela, and at the outset of the book his virtue is as sorely tried as was his sister's; but Fielding soon dropped the idea of parody and made of *Joseph Andrews* a much better book than Richardson had made of *Pamela*. Throughout that book Richardson had always referred to his hero as Mr. B., but Fielding took the liberty of naming him Mr. Booby and even went so far as to introduce Mr. Booby and the exceedingly virtuous Pamela (now Lady Booby) into his own book. Richardson was much incensed at Fielding's impertinence and lost no opportunity to denounce him as a low fellow.



Henry Fielding

In 1743 Fielding wrote *Jonathan Wild*, based on the life of a notorious criminal who ended his career on the gallows. His greatest novel, however, was *Tom Jones* (1749), which is generally regarded as the best work of fiction produced during that century and is ranked by some as the best novel ever written. It tells with much vigor and realism the story of a foundling who grows up to be a most attractive scamp of a hero. There are varied incidents, in high life and low, related with abundant humor and breeziness of spirit. The story was so admirably put together that Coleridge pronounced it one of the finest plots in all literature. Some of Fielding's contemporaries, carried away by their admiration for Richardson's sentimental creations, were inclined to frown upon so boisterous and irrepressible a person as Tom Jones, but posterity has been completely won over by Fielding's hero. The book was written in the prime of the author's career and in the fulness of his experience, and it depicts faithfully the life of his age as he knew it.

Fielding's last novel, *Amelia*, appeared in 1751. It is inferior to *Tom Jones*, but only in the sense that Shakespeare's plays of the final period are inferior to his best tragedies. If there is less enthusiasm and spirit, there is on the other hand a more mature and mellow attitude on the part of the author toward the story as it unfolds itself. *Amelia* is far better than Richardson at his best. It may be accepted as one of our most faithful pictures of eighteenth century middle class society. Fielding went to Lisbon in 1754 to recuperate after a serious illness and died there a few months later. His *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1755) appeared after his death.

27. Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) was the third of the distinguished novelists of the century. He was a Scotchman who received his education at the University of Glasgow, was apprenticed to a doctor, and became a surgeon's mate in the Navy at the age of nineteen. After a varied experience

about the world he settled in London and devoted himself to literature. He is best remembered for his picaresque novels *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), and *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771). The last is generally accepted as his best work. These stories reveal less skill in character delineation than we find in Richardson or Fielding, but they abound in stirring adventure and much broad humor. Among his many other works are a history of England, a universal history, and translations of *Gil Blas* and *Don Quixote*. He also served as editor of *The Critical Review* and *The British Magazine*. Few English writers had to do so much hack-work for so little reward. From first to last he had a hard struggle and is less generally read to-day than most of his contemporaries. This may be partly due to the fact that he had a tendency to permit his characters to degenerate into caricatures in order to make them more interesting. This quality was afterwards reflected in the work of Dickens, who was much influenced by Smollett. We should always remember, even if we do pass over Smollett's novels nowadays, that his intimate knowledge of the sea enabled him to depict in his books the first real sailors in English literature.

28. Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) was the sentimental humorist among the early novel writers. He was born in Ireland, educated in Jesus College, Cambridge, and then entered the Anglican Church. His seven volumes of *Sermons* are readily disregarded in favor of his whimsical novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767), a series of quaint, disjointed sketches originally published in nine volumes and together constituting one of the strangest books ever written. There are subtly humorous descriptions of the members of the Shandy family, Uncle Toby being one of the outstanding characters in English fiction. At the same time there is much affectation and a studied indelicacy of expression that many readers find more of-

fensive than frank coarseness. Sterne's humor was fantastic, presenting the most unexpected quips and jests at every turn. Few writers have been so eccentric, so chaotic, and so droll in assembling their ideas. His other novel, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, is of slighter proportions, but reveals the same peculiarities of style.

In spite of his association with the Church, Sterne's life was anything but clerical, and it ended badly. He died in a mean lodging in London, unattended by friends, and was buried in a parish churchyard. The place of interment was noted by certain persons who were then called "resurrection-men" and more recently "body-snatchers." These vile creatures exhumed the corpse and disposed of it to a professor of anatomy at Cambridge. Thus, as one moralist observed, poor Sterne came back to his old University in the end — but as a subject for the dissecting-table.

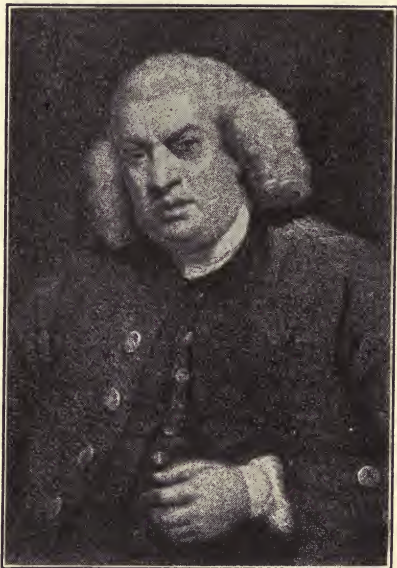
SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)

29. Character of the Period. Although the spirit of classicism was waning during the latter half of the eighteenth century, neither Dryden nor Pope dominated their respective ages quite so effectively nor so majestically as Dr. Samuel Johnson, the Ursa Major of his day and the last of the great literary dictators, presided over the intellectual destinies of England during the epoch of classical decline. While others were beginning to question the value of the formal literary principles that had prevailed for a century or more, this huge man upheld those traditions without compromise, and by his very obstinacy imposed them upon literature for another generation. It was an age of rapid colonial expansion and shifting social conditions. England secured control of India with its incredible wealth and resources through the activities of Clive. At the same time she ousted France from North America and added Canada to the British Em-

pire. Under the leadership of William Pitt the Elder there was great political and material progress, but the unwise policy of Lord North while Prime Minister (1770–1782) resulted in the Revolutionary War and the loss of the American colonies. There was a most significant religious revival during the period under the leadership of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. George Whitefield carried the new evangelism to Scotland, Ireland, and America. Both leaders made an emotional and spiritual appeal that differed radically from the formal intellectual attitude toward religion prevalent at that time.

30. Johnson's Early Career. Samuel Johnson was born in Lichfield, 1709, and was the son of Michael Johnson, a poor bookseller of that town. As a boy he had the run of his father's shop and browsed freely among the

books, reading all sorts of literature that came into his hands. At eighteen he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, but because of poverty had to leave before he could take his degree. His early manhood was a period of struggle against want. At twenty-five he married a widow who was almost twice his age, and with her small fortune of £800 he established a school, but the venture failed. Accompanied by one of his few pupils, David Garrick, he went to London in 1737 to



Dr. Samuel Johnson

seek his fortunes. Garrick went on the stage and speedily achieved wealth and recognition as the leading actor of his time; Johnson, however, had hard years of discouraging experience as a hack-writer ahead of him. He earned a few shillings occasionally by writing for *The Gentlemen's*



Johnson's Birthplace

Magazine and later for *The Monthly Review*, but very often he had not sufficient money to pay for his night's lodging. His poem *London* (1738), a satire in the classical style, brought him some praise, but little pecuniary reward. Recognition became more general in 1749, when he printed his most important poem,

The Vanity of Human Wishes, which contains many passages of dignified moralizing. The familiar couplet with its synonymous expressions

Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru

is characteristic of Johnson's fondness for mere words. Tennyson once remarked of this passage: "Why did he not say, 'Let observation, with extended observation, observe extensively'?"

About the same time Johnson's tragedy of *Irene*, which he had brought with him to London, was presented by Garrick and received with much acclaim by the critics, though it failed to hold the boards. Fortunately for Johnson, his share of the profits arising from the production was nearly £300. *Irene*

observed the rules demanded of classical drama in that period, but a modern reader would find the play insufferably dull.

31. The English Dictionary. When Johnson, after a ten years' residence in London, brought out a plan for a new dictionary of the English language, a group of prominent booksellers agreed to give him a commission to carry out that important project for £1575. He worked for seven years at his task, assisted by several needy scholars who clipped and arranged quotations for him. During the monotonous period of compilation he found time to conduct a periodical called *The Rambler* (1750-1752), which was modeled after *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Johnson lacked the light and graceful style that had contributed so largely to the success of the earlier papers, but there are among his essays a considerable number that do not deserve neglect. His wife died in 1752, and Johnson sincerely mourned her loss. In spite of the difference in their ages and her many peculiarities, she knew the nature of the distinguished man who appeared so churlish and overbearing to the world, and she retained his affection to the end.

The *English Dictionary* appeared in 1755 and established Johnson's position as the leading literary man of the day. Published in two large volumes, it was the most ambitious work of the kind that had been attempted in England and it at once became the recognized authority. Johnson was not well equipped for his important task, as his training had been irregular and his knowledge of modern languages was restricted. Moreover, he did not at first understand that a dictionary should be an impersonal piece of work, free from the compiler's individual opinions or prejudices. A search through the stately pages of the *Dictionary* will reveal such memorable definitions as these:

lexicographer. A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge.
net-work. Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.

oats. A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.

patron. One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is repaid with flattery.

pension. An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.



Painting by E. M. Ward

Johnson at Lord Chesterfield's

pensioner. A slave of state hired by a stipend to obey his master.

tory. One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state and the apostolical hierarchy of the church of England; opposed to a whig.

whig. The name of a faction.

Such peculiarities, however, should not blind us to the immense amount of genuine labor that went into the making

of the great *Dictionary*. Apart from the assistance that Johnson had received from the scholars who had arranged the quotations, the *Dictionary* represents his own work and remains to this day a substantial monument to his literary industry.

Up to that time it had been an almost general practice for writers to dedicate their works to some royal or noble patron, who usually repaid the compliment with some practical evidence of his favor. The wealthy Earl of Chesterfield, who had refused to help Johnson at the outset of this undertaking, delicately intimated eight years later, when the work was ready for the press, that he would be pleased to have the *Dictionary* dedicated to himself. Johnson's indignation at this impertinent suggestion was voiced in a vigorous reply that marked the deathblow to literary patronage in England. His stinging *Letter to Lord Chesterfield* is a notable document in the history of literature. The *English Dictionary* won for Johnson the degree of M.A. from Oxford University, but made no immediate improvement in his financial condition, as he had expended his commissions long before the book was ready for the press. In 1756 he even suffered the humiliation of being arrested for debt, but a loan from Richardson effected his release.

32. His Later Years. Between 1758 and 1760 Johnson published *The Idler*, a series of papers that showed some improvement over *The Rambler*, but failed to achieve the degree of popularity that attended the publication of *The Spectator* nearly half a century earlier. During this period he made his only attempt at writing an English novel. *Rasselas, the Prince of Abyssinia* (1759) is said to have been written in a week. There was a story to the effect that Johnson had written the novel to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral, but that explanation is now discredited. *Rasselas* relates the adventures of an imaginary Prince who dwelt in an earthly Paradise situated in an ideal Abyssinia of

Johnson's own creation. From this Happy Valley he wandered forth to learn what rank of life might be considered most desirable. After much investigation and discussion he came to the sensible conclusion that every human career has its drawbacks. *Rasselas* was widely admired and discussed in its day but, like almost all of Johnson's writings, is no longer read. The style is heavy, and the thin story is padded out with interminable disquisitions by the learned characters.

Johnson's position became more tolerable after 1762, when George III granted him a pension of £300, which he accepted in spite of his sarcastic definitions of *pension* and *pensioner* in the first edition of his *English Dictionary*. He was thus relieved from the wretched drudgery that so many unfortunate literary men of that period had to carry to the end of their days. He had more leisure to engage in critical conversations and debates with his friends. About 1764 there came into existence The Club (sometimes called The Literary Club), a famous group of men including such figures as Goldsmith, Burke, Sheridan, Gibbon, Garrick, Reynolds, and others, who for the next twenty years continued their informal organization with Dr. Johnson as the recognized head and source of literary authority and tradition. With his huge physical bulk and slovenly attire, his heavy face, scarred by the ravages of scrofula, and his large unpowdered wig, Johnson must have been a remarkable figure as he passed along the Strand.

Among his later works was an edition of Shakespeare (1765) that does not compare favorably with others prepared by less famous men. At the invitation of several publishers he prepared his *Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781) in which much of his best critical writing is to be found. The *Lives* are very uneven in quality and reflect his strong prejudices. He was especially unsympathetic toward Milton, Gray, and other leading poets; many of the smaller gentry were treated

with more consideration. In view of the fact that Johnson was too lazy to verify most of the statements printed about some of the poets, his book is altogether untrustworthy and should be read only for its critical observations.

During his last years Johnson sheltered in his home a group of aged, destitute persons who lived on his bounty, quarreled among themselves, and grumbled at their host.

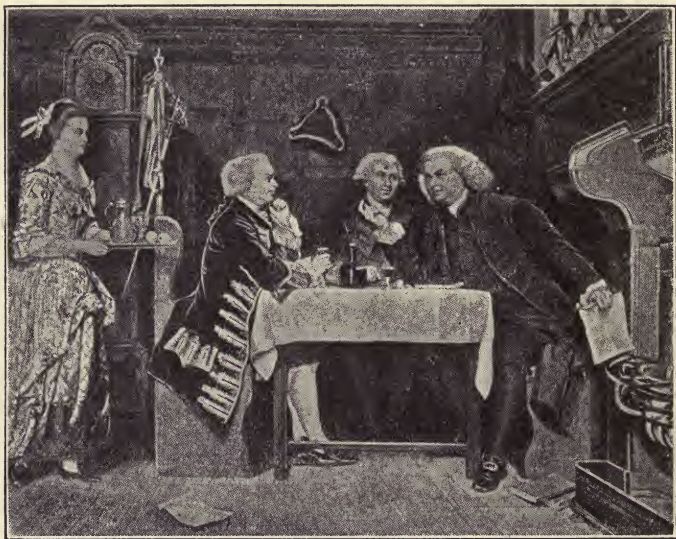


Painting by J. E. Doyle

A Meeting of The Club

He not only ignored the ingratitude of this "strange menagerie," but even gave them allowances from his pension. In 1773 Johnson and his friend Boswell made a tour of the Hebrides and the Scotch Highlands; afterwards both men published accounts of their experiences and reminiscences of the trip. When Johnson died in 1784 he was buried in Westminster Abbey beside his friend Garrick.

33. Boswell's Life of Johnson. Seven years after the death of the "Leviathan of Literature" there appeared a *Life of Johnson* that is accepted everywhere as the best biography in the English language. The author, James Boswell (1740–1795), was a garrulous Scotch lawyer who made Johnson's acquaintance in 1763 and wisely cultivated the friendship of the great man. On his occasional visits



Painting by Crowe

Johnson, Goldsmith, and Boswell at the Mitre Tavern

to London he spent much of his time in the Johnsonian circle and recorded many of the memorable conversations. Although contemporaries called him a jackanapes, a scrap-monger, and a bore, Boswell was admirably fitted for the task he had undertaken. The biography is not merely a life of Johnson — it is a literary panorama of the age. No one who is at all interested in the period can afford to remain ignorant of that entertaining and most remarkable book.

In its pages Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds, and a host of other personages appear very much alive to-day. Poor homely Goldsmith is portrayed as an erratic creature, boasting of his bloom-colored coat until he is rebuked by Johnson and Garrick for his bad taste. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the leading artist of his day and honored as the first to propose the organization of The Club, not only entertained the great man at his home, but had many letters from him. On his deathbed Johnson asked Reynolds to forgive him the loan of thirty pounds, to read his Bible, and never to use his pencil on a Sunday. Sir Joshua agreed to all these requests. Garrick figures still more largely in the book, and is described as convulsing the group by mimicking Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson as well. Burke, another original member of The Club, is characterized by the Doctor as an extraordinary man whose familiar conversation corresponded to his general fame. Gibbon was disliked by Boswell and was rarely mentioned. These are but a few of the notable figures who are so graphically described in the great biography. Boswell was not a man of unusual attainments, but he deserves the greatest credit for having discovered for himself a most effective way to literary immortality. He is now better known and more gratefully remembered than most of the witty men who called him hard names during his lifetime.

34. Johnson's Style. In many of his writings, as well as in his recorded speech, Johnson adopted a somewhat stilted manner of expression, with abundant use of sonorous words from classical sources. While his style improved as he grew older, he was always fond of resounding phrases and dignified periods, or "Johnsonese," as the manner came to be known. There were times, however, when he shook off this habit and wrote with vigor in racy, Anglo-Saxon diction. It is the irony of fate that none of the great man's works has survived the test of time, as far as the general

reader is concerned. He is best known to our generation as the one dominating figure in the alluring pages of Boswell.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

35. A Restless Youth. Oliver Goldsmith was born in 1728 at Pallas, a little village in Ireland. His father, a poor clergyman, was unable to provide for the proper education of his family. Nevertheless Oliver managed to get some early training and attended Dublin University as a sizar. There he gave a poor account of himself as a student. On



Oliver Goldsmith

one occasion he felt so much disgraced that he started for Cork with the intention of sailing for America. Very early he revealed a somewhat erratic nature that did not make him any the less interesting. He tried to become a clergyman, but failed; a well-disposed uncle suggested the law and provided funds to take Goldsmith to London. Unfortunately the money was frittered away in gambling, and the prospective law student returned penniless to his home.

He then served for a short time as a tutor and made another vain attempt to embark for America. Next he went to Edinburgh and Leyden to study medicine. After several years of fruitless wandering about the Continent he returned to London with an alleged diploma and began the practice of medicine. Within a year he gave up the struggle and turned to teaching. Afterwards he became an apothecary's assistant and even, in spite of his homely features, undertook for a time to make a living as an actor. Like many a jack-of-all-trades, he turned to literature as a last resort and earned a few shillings doing hack-work for the magazines.

36. Literary Works. Amid the great mass of miscellaneous work which his poverty impelled him to produce, only a few titles stand out conspicuously. His *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning* appeared in 1759 and attracted some attention. *A Citizen of the World* (1762), which had first appeared in periodical form as *The Chinese Letters*, was a gentle satire on English society, purporting to be the letters written by a Chinese visitor to England. The device was not original with Goldsmith, but it enabled him to develop some interesting and humorous commentary on English life as it might appeal to an Oriental mind. In this work Goldsmith created the memorable character of Beau Tibbs, a poor wretch who aped the speech and manner of the fashionable world, and boasted of his intimacy with the nobility.

Goldsmith's best poems are *The Traveler* (1765) and *The Deserted Village* (1770), both of which are written in the prevailing style of rhymed couplets. There are fine passages in the former, but *The Deserted Village* in its entirety has passed into our classic literature. The vivacious picture of the village life in its prime, the admirable descriptions of the country-inn, the schoolmaster, and the parson reflect the tenderest recollections of the poet's early years. Critical spirits have taken exception to the economic doctrine taught in the poem and have called attention to the crouching tigers that are permitted to wait for their prey in the forests of our own state of Georgia, but we can forgive a few such slight blemishes in a poem of such tender beauty.

In *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) Goldsmith made a very important contribution to English fiction. To many it may seem strange that this charming story of idyllic life — indeed, the most lovable novel of that century — should have been written by an eccentric bachelor who moved mainly between his lodgings and his favorite taverns. Yet there are many revelations of Goldsmith's own friendly

nature in its pages. We readily overlook the manifest faults of plot and construction in recalling the mingled humor and pathos of the tale. We do not soon forget the goodly vicar, Dr. Primrose, nor his daughters, Olivia and Sophia; least of all, perhaps, his blundering son Moses. Among the immortals of fiction an assured place has been found for Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs. *The Vicar of*



Painting by E. M. Ward

Johnson Reads the MS. of *The Vicar of Wakefield*

Wakefield emphasizes the homely doctrine that kindness and gentleness are never out of fashion; it teaches the old, old lesson that good shall prevail over evil. The proceeds from the sale of the book to the publisher saved Goldsmith from being arrested for debt. His landlady had already apprehended him when the unfortunate author sent for his friend Dr. Johnson, who promptly came, looked over the manuscript, recognized its merit, and took it to the book-

seller's, where he sold it for £60. When Goldsmith received the money he not only paid the insistent landlady, but berated her for having treated him so badly. *The Vicar of Wakefield* became immediately popular and was translated into most of the languages of Europe. More than a hundred editions have been published since Goldsmith's time, and there is no indication that the world will ever tire of this delightful tale of English country life.

37. Later Writings. Two important comedies, *The Good Natured Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), are among the very few plays of the eighteenth century that have not been swept into oblivion. They afford the best evidence that it is possible to be witty in dramatic writing without being licentious. *The Good Natured Man* no longer holds the stage, but *She Stoops to Conquer* is still found in professional répertoires. There are admirable situations in the play, which had its origin in one of Goldsmith's own absurd blunders of mistaking a private house for an inn and ordering the servants about. While the story is essentially farcical, the spirited dialogue is written in a comedy vein. The character of Tony Lumpkin was for many years a favorite rôle among comedians.

The lash of poverty impelled the composition of more hack-work, but poor Goldsmith was willing to furnish any book the publishers ordered. In the field of history alone he wrote popular outlines of Rome, England, and Greece; then he capped the climax by writing a *History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774) in eight volumes. This work was, as usual, merely a compilation from the books of other writers, and because of his ignorance of natural history Goldsmith fell into many ridiculous mistakes. The dodo, which had been extinct for nearly a hundred years, was described with the same wealth of detail as the canary-bird, although, as one critic said, Goldsmith hardly knew a turkey from a goose except when he saw it served on the table.

Numerous minor books and pamphlets of every description flowed from Goldsmith's busy pen during the last seven years of his literary drudgery. Few English writers were more completely the slaves of their calling. He continued to write in his dingy quarters in the Middle Temple, London,



Goldsmith's Grave, Temple Gardens

until his death in 1774, when he was buried in the Temple Gardens. His fellow-members in The Club erected a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey with a grandiloquent Latin epitaph by Dr. Johnson, who, confirmed

classicist that he was, refused to desecrate the Abbey with an inscription in English.

38. Goldsmith's Character. Goldsmith was an erratic creature; lovable and generous, yet capable of the most absurd actions. Johnson said of him, "No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had." He would struggle for weeks or even months to gain a few pounds from the booksellers; when the money was in his hands he would squander it for gay attire or in riotous dinners for his associates. At the time of his death he was in debt to the extent of £2000. "Was ever poet so trusted before?" wrote Johnson to Boswell in giving a brief account of Goldsmith's end. Those who knew him best admitted his frivolity, his vanity, and his improvidence. Their regard for his admirable qualities was mixed with contempt for his many faults. Horace Walpole called him an inspired idiot; Garrick said Goldsmith "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll." Yet throughout his work there breathes a fine spirit of esteem for the better things

of life. His compassion for those in affliction and his interest in those who had to traverse lowly walks in life reveal him as a prophet, thinking in terms of a later age, of a coming brotherhood of man. Like Steele before him and Lamb after him, Goldsmith had too many really commendable qualities to permit us to dwell long on his failings. There is a natural simplicity and a sincerity about his work at its best that lift it far beyond the standards of the artificial, cynical age in which he lived and wrote.

EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797)

39. An Independent Nature. Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, 1729, and was the son of Richard Burke, an attorney. He was educated at Ballitore and at fourteen went to Trinity College, Dublin. Upon completing his training there he was sent to London to study law at the Middle Temple. He soon developed more inclination for literature than for his law-books. When his father heard of this, he cut off Edmund's allowance, expecting thereby to bring the young man to terms. Edmund, however, promptly took up literature as a means of livelihood and brought out two important essays, *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1755), a reply to Lord Bolingbroke's attack on natural religion, and *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). In the same year Burke went to Bath to recuperate from illness brought on by excessive study.



Edmund Burke

There he married Jane Nugent, the daughter of his physician. In 1759 he became the editor of the newly established *Annual Register* and continued to edit that publication for thirty years. From 1759 to 1764 he acted as secretary for William Gerard Hamilton, a politician better known as "Single-Speech Hamilton," who secured for Burke a pension of £300, but within a year Burke recognized the false position in which such a favor would place him and gave up the pension.

40. A Member of Parliament. Burke was elected to Parliament in 1765 and during the following nine momentous years represented Wendover. He soon won a reputation for eloquence and for his comprehensive knowledge of every subject on which he undertook to speak. Early in his parliamentary career Burke interested himself in American affairs and advocated fair treatment of the Colonies. He visited Ireland in 1766 and afterwards vigorously assailed the policy of the British government in that country. With his purchase of the fine estate of Beaconsfield in 1768 he assumed financial obligations that kept him in difficulties for the rest of his life. His *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770) traced the growing dissatisfaction in England and in her Colonies to secret government by a few of the King's friends and he advocated open party control. It was Burke's first significant warning against dangers that were soon to cause England great humiliation. His fine speech on *American Taxation* (1774) was an unsuccessful attempt to impress upon the Government the folly of its policy toward the American Colonies. Lord North persisted in carrying out his plans in his own way. As America showed no signs of yielding, various plans of compromise were suggested. Burke made his *Speech on Conciliation with America* (1775), which reveals his oratorical style at its best. In this masterpiece of eloquence Burke strongly urged the need for a more considerate attitude toward America. He stressed with prophetic vision the growing importance of the Colonies

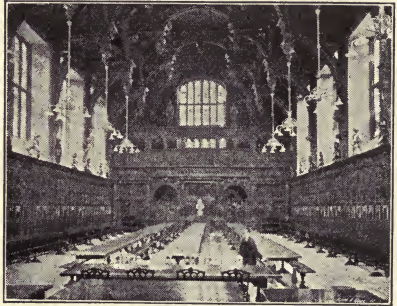
and analyzed in sympathetic spirit the temperament of the people. Skillfully he adduced one argument after another to convince his fellow-countrymen that instead of irritating the Americans they should make such reasonable concessions as would strengthen the bonds of affection between the Colonies and the mother-country. The speech abounds in finely sustained passages of declamation and in figurative illustration. During the greater part of the Revolutionary War, Burke represented Bristol in Parliament and continued his protest against the Government's American policy. His

Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol (1777) presents most adequately his views in the matter. During his later parliamentary career (1781-1794), as member for Malton, he had the pleasure of forcing the resignation of Lord North and of reversing King George III's

costly experiment of running the Government according to his own ideas — or lack of them. Goldsmith in his witty poem, *Retaliation*, wrote rather irreverently in his mock obituary of Burke:

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot too cool; for a drudge disobedient;
And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.



Middle Temple Hall

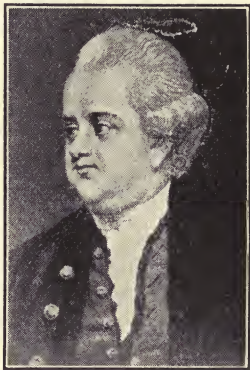
41. **Affairs in India.** Another field in which Burke was most active was in connection with English interests in India. He began his investigation of the East India Company in 1783 and two years later denounced Warren Hastings, who was then Governor-General of India. The impeachment of Hastings in 1787 resulted in a trial that dragged on for over six years. Burke's opening speech for the prosecution lasted four days, and in 1794 he made a nine days' speech reviewing all the details of the evidence. Although Hastings was eventually acquitted, all England recognized that Burke had really won his case. An important principle was established for the future regulation of Indian affairs; the exploitation of that country by men of the Hastings stamp came to an end.

42. **Closing Years.** At the outbreak of the French Revolution, Burke boldly took the unpopular side and denounced the revolutionists. English opinion was gradually molded by Burke's attitude. His *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) was a sweeping condemnation of the state of affairs in France. His anticipation of the evils to come seemed almost prophetic. Bitter days were in store for him as well. His only son died in 1794, leaving Burke a heart-broken man. He retired from Parliament that year, with two pensions amounting to £3700. When two wealthy young noblemen sneered at him for accepting this bounty, Burke published his *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1795), which was not only a vigorous reply to his traducers, but a notable review of his long years of service to England. His last important work was his *Letters on a Regicidal Peace* (1796), which is less significant for its political than for its literary quality. He died in 1797 at Beaconsfield and was buried in the local parish church.

Burke is remembered not merely as a well-informed and gifted statesman, but as an unselfish, high-minded patriot, zealous for the good name and the welfare of his country.

England may have had more eloquent orators and more sagacious men in public life, but not often did she command the services of one who united those qualities as admirably as Burke. He was willing to accept unpopularity and a reversal of political fortune in his unequivocal stand for what he regarded as fundamental principles of sound government. Only a man whose record is clean could have pursued the course that Burke followed to the end. No man of his time better deserved the fine title that was applied to him — the friend of human liberty.

43. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794), another member of Dr. Johnson's literary circle, was born at Putney, a suburb of London, attended Westminster School, and then proceeded to Magdalen College, Oxford. He learned so little from his teachers there that he later denounced the University in scathing terms. As a youth he seemed inclined to become a convert to the Roman Catholic Church. His father thereupon sent him to Lausanne, in Switzerland, to draw him back to his Protestant faith. The result was that Gibbon for a time gave up all belief in religion. A love-affair with a Mlle. Susanne Curchod developed, but when threatened with disinheritance, Gibbon dutifully returned to his father in London. "I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son," wrote Gibbon afterwards. "My wound was insensibly healed by time, and the habits of a new life; and my cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the Lady herself." The tranquil Lady who so fortunately escaped this impossible lover eventually married the distinguished banker, Joseph Necker, one of the leading states-



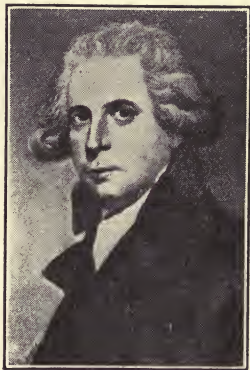
Edward Gibbon

men of the reign of Louis XVI; Gibbon discreetly remained a bachelor. Several contemporaries have given us pen-portraits of this curious little man, scarcely four feet, eight inches high, with a fat body resting heavily on slender legs, and a face in which a small nose was almost lost between his chubby cheeks. Boswell expressed his dislike frankly when he wrote: "Gibbon is an ugly, affected, disgusting fellow and poisons our literary club to me."

It was during a visit to Rome in 1764 as he sat "musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter" that the idea of writing the story of the decline and fall of the great city first occurred to Gibbon. He labored zealously for twelve years before the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was ready for publication (1776). Another twelve years elapsed before the sixth and final volume appeared. This monumental work, covering the entire range of Roman history from the time of Trajan (98 A.D.) to the Fall of Constantinople (1453), is like a gorgeous panorama of stirring incidents. The gradual crumbling of the mighty empire under the later Caesars, the overwhelming invasions by the Goths and the Vandals, the gradual spread of Christianity over western Europe, the rise of the Byzantine Empire, the westward surge of Mohammedanism, the pomp and circumstance of the Crusades — all these and more are presented in language that is at once animated, sonorous, and majestic. Gibbon's fondness for painting word-pictures of impressive historical events should be noted. If in the stately glitter of his carefully studied style we miss the natural simplicity that marks the manner of Goldsmith in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, we must not forget that Gibbon deliberately adopted the more ornate diction as better fitted for the colorful historical events of which he was writing. Apart from its literary quality Gibbon's work represents the most careful scholarship and painstaking research. It

is so complete and so trustworthy in detail that it has the unusual distinction of being considered as the only historical work produced in the eighteenth century that has not been superseded by the investigations of later writers.

44. **Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816)**, a witty Irishman and one of the younger men in *The Club*, was born in Dublin, educated at Harrow, and became active as a theater-manager and a member of Parliament, but he is best remembered as the author of two admirable social comedies, *The Rivals* (1775) and *The School for Scandal* (1777). Both of these clever plays abound in satiric character drawing and in amusing scenes. Such personages as Sir Anthony Absolute, Bob Acres, and, above all, Mrs. Malaprop, are classic figures in English comedy, yet the first performance of *The Rivals* was accounted a failure. *The School for Scandal* is a superior play and has been more popular on the stage. Few comedies of any period reveal such consistently brilliant dialogue—or such characters as Joseph Surface, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle. For the exaggerated, boisterous fun of *The Rivals* Sheridan substituted in his later play a cleverly planned situation to expose with biting wit the cant and the hypocrisy of certain elements in society. These two comedies, with Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, are the only plays of the century that survive on the modern stage. His once famous farce, *The Critic* (1779), is now neglected. In Parliament he was regarded as one of the great orators of the day. He made an impressive six hours' speech against Warren Hastings at the beginning of the impeachment and several other important speeches during



Richard Brinsley Sheridan

the long trial. The comedies that achieved his fame all belong to his earlier life. During his later career he suffered many reverses; twice the Drury Lane Theater, of which he was manager, was burnt down. He died in 1816 in wretched circumstances and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was virtually the last of the brilliant coterie of men who had enjoyed a conspicuous place in the circle of Dr. Johnson during the waning days of classical influence in England.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY ROMANTICISM

1. The Reaction. It was impossible that the cold formalism of the eighteenth century should impose itself indefinitely upon English literature. The classical spirit of restraint had suppressed enthusiasm and joyous exultation over the beauty of life, but there were those to whom such suppression was intolerable. They felt that much in their experience called for a free, emotional utterance; they were tired of standards derived from the ancients and of precepts laid down by Boileau. Although the leading authors who wrote under the leadership of Pope and accepted him as a model of correctness did not share that feeling, there were even in the heyday of Pope's fame less important writers who were eager to express their feelings naturally in literary form. In these evidences of rebellion from Classicism we find the first traces of the great Romantic Movement that culminated in the work of Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; beyond those great writers the same romantic traditions have continued to dominate literature to the present day.

2. Religious Influences. One of the signs of the new epoch was a marked change in man's attitude toward religion. Worship of God was no longer regarded as a mere matter of form. Fervent earnestness characterized the reformers who preached zealously against spiritual indifference. The great mass of the people were especially moved by the writings and the preaching of John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism. Other denominations sprang up, and the Church of England found itself on the defensive, stimulated to the point of proving its right to leadership and

spiritual authority. The rapid growth of the various dissenting bodies was beneficial, because it aroused England from a state of spiritual lethargy to a sincere interest in religion as a vital issue in man's existence.

3. Individualism. Classicism, with its inherent respect for authority and tradition, did much to uphold distinctions of social rank. Its literary expression directed attention mainly to those persons who constituted the upper classes. Poetical epistles were addressed to influential noblemen who would be completely forgotten to-day, were it not for the literary merit of the flattering tributes from poets who sought the patronage of the great. The common people were generally considered unworthy of literary notice. Their feelings mattered little; they were not supposed to have laudable ambitions or dreams of better conditions. In fact, a belief prevailed that sympathy for the oppressed classes was disrespectful to the Creator. Pope's dictum, "Whatever is, is right," proved to the satisfaction of many that God would not permit the poor to remain in their misery and degradation if it were not His will.

With the beginning of the romantic revival a new note was struck. Literature turned to lowly life and examined it critically and sympathetically. Men were no longer conveniently labeled as aristocrats, shopkeepers, artisans, and what not. They became individual human beings, each with his own life to live and his own problems to solve. As soon as thinking men realized that the experiences of a poor servant girl or of a humble parson could serve as material for significant literature, the dawn of individualism was under way. It was but a few short years from *Pamela* and *The Vicar of Wakefield* to the time when the democratic spirit of the French Revolution proclaimed the new principles of the equality and essential brotherhood of men.

4. The Influence of Nature. The classical age of literature in England stressed mainly the life of the city in general

and of London in particular. Its interest in nature was largely secondary to its celebration of man's efforts to improve on nature. If it accorded praise to well-ordered parks or sylvan groves with statues of ancient deities, it was because man had brought his intelligence to bear and had made such places more attractive. For the expansive country-side, the glorious forests of England, or its rugged coast-scenery there was little enthusiasm. All these were crude and lacking in that refinement which civilization alone



View of the Thames

could give to the disordered world in a natural state. With the development of romantic feeling, however, there came a genuine appreciation not only for the glory of the sunrise and the sunset, the beauty of field and forest, but also for the wilder, sublimer aspects of nature—for raging mountain cataracts, for the fury of the storm, for gloomy, inaccessible mountain peaks, for the tossing and tumultuous seas.

5. A Broader Horizon. Mankind also began to chafe at the narrow circle of subjects that engaged the attention of

classical writers. There were other questions of interest that were quite unknown to the authors of Greece and Rome. Scholars began to investigate the early history and folk-lore of the Celtic and Teutonic races. Evidences of primitive art, mythology, and literature were eagerly sought out and studied. Proverbs, ballads, and other remains of earlier culture among the lowly became a matter of scholarly concern. Superstitions and traditions of every sort were investigated and discussed. Memorials of the past were carefully preserved as treasured evidences of whatever civilization the race had enjoyed. Recognition of the fact that former authors, especially Chaucer and Shakespeare, had been greater writers than those ambitious classicists who had undertaken to "improve" or "adapt" the originals, helped to break down the self-complacency of the passing age of classicism.

Such influences, exerted with ever-increasing force, brought about the eventual downfall of artificial standards. The heroic couplet was gradually discarded; poets chose whatever meter best fitted their subject-matter. Simple Saxon words supplanted the Latinized diction of the Augustans. Straightforward simplicity took the place of studied phrase and polished figures of speech. A highly decorative literature of art gradually became a frank, direct literature of nature. The men who accomplished this significant change were affected by the new impulses in varying degrees; they were distinctively writers of a transition period and hence not influences of the highest importance. Yet each in his own way helped to make possible the great romantic triumph that was achieved within a century and that continues to the present day as the dominating force in our literature.

6. **James Thomson (1700-1748)**, a Scotchman who spent most of his life in London, was the first poet to reflect to any considerable extent the new spirit of romanticism.

Although he wrote no poetry of the highest order, he did venture, at the very height of Pope's authority, to challenge the classical traditions and to blaze new trails for himself. Beginning with a poem on *Winter* in 1726, he went on to *Summer*, then *Spring*, and finally completed *The Seasons* with *Autumn* in 1730. The significant fact about Thomson's *Seasons* is the choice of blank verse at a period when the heroic couplet was supposed to be supreme. In spite of occasional dullness, the poem is marked by passages revealing a sincere love for nature:

And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shatter'd forest and the ravag'd vale;
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

Thomson could not, however, break away from the conventional epithets so typical of classical verse. He wrote "excited atmosphere" for "storm," and called birds "plumy people." When it rained Thomson told his readers that "the clouds consign their treasures to the fields."

Later in life he wrote *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), in which he not only used the Spenserian meter effectively, but imitated Spenser's archaic language. In a quiet castle, situated in the pleasing land of Drowsy-head, a most enchanting wizard named Indolence makes his numerous guests so tired that they are even too lazy to play. The allegory is somewhat labored and the poem is notable mainly for the choice of such an unexpected meter. Thomson is best remembered as the author of *Rule, Britannia*, which first appeared (1740) as an incidental song in his play *The Masque of Alfred*.

7. Edward Young (1683-1765), whose long life stretched beyond the period of Pope and most of his contemporaries,

was an Oxford man and a member of Addison's circle. He wrote plays and much verse of little merit, but toward the end of his career he showed a willingness to abandon the older tradition and cast his lot with the romantic writers. Although his early verse is generally in the style of Pope, his principal poem, *Night Thoughts* (1742-1746), was written in blank verse and published in nine parts. The full title, *The Complaint; or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, does not offer a very cheerful prospect to the reader, yet the poem became popular in spite of long stretches of unrelieved gloom. At one time, now happily past, it was considered the proper thing to give a morocco-bound copy of this versified grave-yard sermon to any friend who happened to be ill or in affliction. Critics have suggested that Young must have enjoyed being thoroughly unhappy and regret that he did not permit a little star-light to filter into his *Night Thoughts*.

8. William Collins (1721-1759) was born in Chichester and educated at Oxford. His meager poetical work includes a volume of *Odes* (1747) that take high rank in our literature. The best of these are the *Ode to Liberty*, the *Ode to Evening*, *The Passions*, and *An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*. In these we find once more the genuine lyric quality that marked the poetry of an earlier period. Thus in the beautiful *Ode to Evening* a fine effect is achieved in unrhymed lyrical form:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn.

Collins's fame as a poet would have been assured had he written no more than the two impressive stanzas that are quite as applicable to England's recent heroic dead as to those who died in 1746:

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

The poems of Collins at their best suggest the Milton that had been and the Wordsworth that was to come. Swinburne regarded him as a "solitary song-bird among many more or less excellent pipers and pianists." In true appreciation for the lyrical quality of poetry and for the best traditions of poetic art, Collins was far in advance of his age.

9. *Ossian*. In 1762 a certain James Macpherson (1736-1796) published a volume called *Fingal*, which purported to be a translation of certain poems produced centuries before by an ancient Gaelic poet named Ossian. A year later Macpherson published the "translation" of another Gaelic poem called *Temora*. A long and bitter controversy arose as to whether these poems were genuine relics of an earlier day or Macpherson's own compositions. It is now generally believed that Macpherson based his "collection" on some few real fragments, but relied on his imagination to amplify what he had discovered. A specimen of *Ossian* will give the best idea of its character:

O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers!
Whence are thy beams, O sun! thy everlasting light? Thou
comest forth in thy awful beauty; the stars hide themselves
in the sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave.
But thou thyself movest alone; who can be a companion of
thy course? The oaks of the mountains fall: the mountains

themselves decay with years: the ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon herself is lost in heaven; but thou art forever the same; rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls, and lightning flies; thou lookest in thy beauty, from the clouds, and laughest at the storm.

Whether genuine Gaelic poetry or not, *Ossian* was much admired and widely imitated by writers who failed to discern the elements of rant and bombast that are much in evidence. Foreigners, especially Germans, preferred *Ossian* to Homer. Goethe and Napoleon raved over it; Scott, Byron, and Cooper were much influenced by its showy style. Few persons read *Ossian* to-day and none concern themselves seriously about its authenticity. Macpherson lived over thirty years after his honesty was questioned by critics as distinguished as Dr. Johnson, but he did not reveal the facts concerning the origin of the Gaelic poems, nor did he respond to the learned Doctor's challenge to produce the old manuscripts. When he died, his generation accorded him a resting-place in Westminster Abbey not far from the grave of Johnson.

10. Percy's Ballads. Three years after the publication of *Ossian* there appeared a far more important book that brought to light many admirable specimens of genuine early literature. Thomas Percy (1729-1811), a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, and later Bishop of Dromore, published his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765) from an old folio manuscript of early songs and ballads. Five years later he translated Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, a scholarly account of Norse mythology. Much of the material in Percy's *Ballads*, as the former work is usually called, is of poor quality, and at times the editor showed the disposition of his age to "improve" upon the primitive material that he had discovered, but there is so much real literature in this diversified collection of ancient balladry that it justifies the name

"Bible of the Romantic Reformation," which has been applied to it. Percy's collection included not merely such fine old pieces as *Chevy Chase*, *The Battle of Otterbourne*, *Sir Patrick Spens*, and several Robin Hood ballads, but a diverse group of lyrical poems by various Elizabethan and Scottish singers. His volumes included learned notes on the ballads, as well as an essay on *The Ancient Minstrels in England*. The reading public quickly recognized in the old ballads a kind of poetry that smacked of the earth — real folk-literature, as contrasted with the artificial rule-bound verse to which their age had become accustomed. The *Ballads* did much to stimulate a taste for early writers not only in England, but all over western Europe. If any year in the eighteenth century could be definitely named as marking the turning point from the old order to the new, from a classical tradition to a romantic freedom from tradition, that year would be 1765, when Percy's *Ballads* first appeared in print.

11. The Romantic Novel. In the field of English fiction a new influence revealed itself in the production of a group of stories that were called "Gothic romances" or "tales of terror." In these stories the prime object seemed to be the stimulation of the reader's imagination with weird narratives of mysterious incident or hair-raising adventure. Horace Walpole (1717–1797), son of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, started the fashion with *The Castle of Otranto: a Gothic Romance* (1764), in which portraits walk out of their frames, drops of blood fall from the nose of a marble statue, and skeletons are seen praying in chapel. The characters spend most of their time in shrieking and swooning at these unusual sights; occasionally their blood freezes in their veins. Walpole undoubtedly did his best to make the reader's blood do likewise.

Mrs. Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823) was the most successful of the followers of Walpole. Her novels were all modeled

after the prevailing fashion. The first important story, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), was followed by *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). Her most popular book was *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), but *The Italian* (1797), a thrilling tale of the Inquisition, is regarded as her best. No finer romantic novel was written by any English author before Scott. Her characters are less interesting than the mysteries she invented to perplex them. Her blue-eyed, auburn-haired heroines always love to watch the setting sun or the rising sun, and then record their impressions of the spectacle. As one critic said, they never permit the sun to rise or set in peace. These fair ladies are led through a maze of adventures in castles with haunted rooms or with sliding panels admitting to subterranean passages where all sorts of ghastly things take place. It seems strange that this quiet little Mrs. Radcliffe, who led an uneventful, sequestered life should have been engaged in producing such wild and wondrous fiction, abounding in the most fantastic happenings amid the strangest surroundings.

12. Other Early Novelists. Not all the novelists of this period were following the example set by Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe. Frances (or Fanny) Burney (1752-1840), the friend of Garrick and of Johnson, created a sensation with her story of *Evelina* (1778), which was followed by several others of less merit. One of her contemporaries referred to Miss Burney as "a saucy spirited little puss," yet she had the honor of writing a novel that evoked high praise from Dr. Johnson, Burke, and Gibbon. *Evelina* is a vivacious story of the fashionable and middle-class life of London in her day with an abundance of good humor, a well-constructed plot, and admirable detail in description. It is to Fanny Burney's glory that she blazed the way for Jane Austen. Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), whose novels were generously praised by Scott, Macaulay, and others, is best known to-day for her *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and *The Absentee*

(1812), both admirable pictures of Irish life. Jane Porter (1776–1850) produced a number of novels, of which only *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810) have maintained their reputation. *Thaddeus of Warsaw* achieved a startling popularity on the Continent and in America, as well as in England. *The Scottish Chiefs* is no longer accepted as trustworthy history of the exploits of Wallace, but it is a book of much spirit and local color. It is noteworthy that all three of these pioneers among women-novelists were born during the lifetime of Dr. Johnson, yet lived to read the earlier novels of Dickens and Thackeray.



Fanny Burney

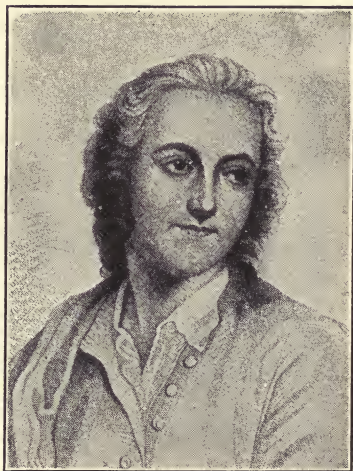
13. Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770) is one of the pitiful figures of the Early Romantic period. Born in Bristol and poorly educated, he revealed a dreamy disposition and spent most of his time delving among the dusty manuscripts in the quaint old church of St. Mary Redcliffe, where his ancestors had served as sextons for several generations. Incredible as it may seem, this “marvelous boy” who did not know his alphabet at six was composing poetry at twelve. His first significant experiment in literary forgery was the fabrication of a false pedigree for a snobbish pewterer of Bristol. He even went so far as to produce a poem, *The Romaunte of the Cynghthe*, alleged to have been written by an imaginary ancestor of his haughty patron. When a new bridge was opened across the Severn in 1768, Chatterton, then a youth of sixteen, claimed that he had discovered an account of the opening of an earlier bridge in 1248. This

forgery was published in *The Bristol Journal*, and young Chatterton was complimented on his industry. Flattered by these successes, he then proceeded to "discover" an entire collection of epic fragments and dramatic lyrics called *The Rowley Poems*, which he declared to be the work of an ancient monk named Thomas Rowley; as a matter of fact, he wrote them himself in a queer, antiquated English that would not have deceived modern scholars, but was accepted as genuine by his contemporaries. He not only revived obsolete forms of words, but also coined many curious words that have the appearance of ancient origin. Unable to find a publisher in Bristol to bring out his "find," Chatterton proceeded to London early in 1770. He met with no encouragement in his effort to make a living as a writer, and after four months of futile attempt to please the publishers, he seemed doomed to perish of starvation. In despair he took poison and died at the early age of seventeen years and nine months.

Among the more notable of the poems of Chatterton are *Aella*, *The Bristowe Tragedy*, and the beautiful *Balade of Charitie*, in which we find echoes of Spenser and anticipations of Keats. Chatterton's contribution to literature is, however, of secondary importance and would receive less attention were it not for the unusual circumstances connected with his pathetic life and the fact that he exerted such far-reaching influence upon the greater poets of the romantic period. Coleridge wrote an impressive *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*; Keats dedicated *Endymion* to his memory; and Shelley mentioned him with honor in *Adonais* among the "inheritors of unfulfilled renown."

14. **Thomas Gray (1716-1771).** In striking contrast to the amount of poetry produced by Chatterton during his few sad years is the surprisingly small achievement of Thomas Gray during a relatively long life. Gray had the most favorable opportunities to develop his literary talents, yet

his reputation rests on less than a half-dozen poems. He was born in London in 1716, the son of a prosperous money-scrivener, and secured his education at Eton College and at Peterhouse, Cambridge. Although he took no degree, he read extensively and traveled with Horace Walpole in France and Italy. He spent the last thirty years of his life at Cambridge, where he was for a short time a very inactive professor of history. Among the few poems that give this indolent scholar his disproportionate position among poets is *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, which is a somewhat artificial presentation of the emotions of an old Etonian who returns in later years and meditates over the newer groups of boys frolicking about in their sports, regardless of the cares and sorrows that the dim future holds in store for them. In another rhetorical ode, *The Bard*, he pictures an aged Welsh minstrel standing on the rock "o'er cold Conway's foaming flood" hurling his curses at the English invaders under Edward I and then plunging headlong into the roaring stream.



Thomas Gray

The *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* (1750) is Gray's masterpiece and will by itself suffice to perpetuate his name, though discerning critics agree that it has been too highly estimated. In spite of Gray's adoption of the quatrain form in place of the heroic couplet, there is much of the classical spirit about the poem. The finely polished lines

and the aptly chosen epithets are suggestive of Pope at his best. The sentiment, of course, is more distinctive and strikes a new note in directing sympathetic consideration for the "short and simple annals of the poor." In the twilight hour of evening the poet meditates over the thwarted yearnings of those who sleep beneath the tomb-stones; he fashions in glowing phrases his exalted sermon on the vanity of worldly ambition. The broken lives of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" betoken for him the unrealized possibilities of humanity in all walks of life; yet he warns

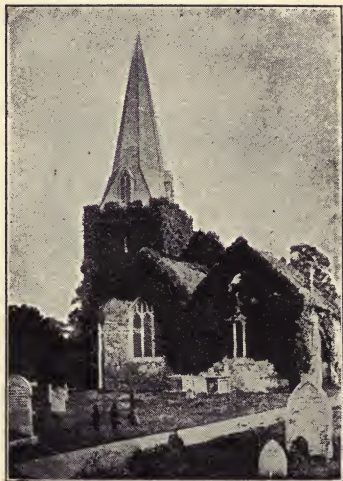


View of Eton College

those proud persons who move in high places that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave." Although like Young in his *Night Thoughts*, Gray chose a melancholy subject, he developed a trend of thought that was quickly grasped by all readers. It is safe to say that no other single poem in our language is more generally admired.

Gray had an opportunity to become Poet Laureate in 1757, but declined the position. His *Letters* (1775) are among the most interesting of that period, and reveal him as a man of discernment and of pleasing personality. He

wrote them in a style neither affected nor stilted, but frank, fluent, and vivacious. Some critics insist that Gray's contribution to the art of letter-writing is more significant than his contribution to poetry, because in spite of the great popularity of the *Elegy*, it must be admitted that a poet like Collins, for example, was far more modern in spirit and really deserved to rank higher in the galaxy of poets. Gray died in 1771 and was buried in Stoke Pogis Church. Johnson treated him very unfairly in the *Lives of the Poets*, but posterity has decided that the author of the *Elegy* is entitled to high place among the immortals.

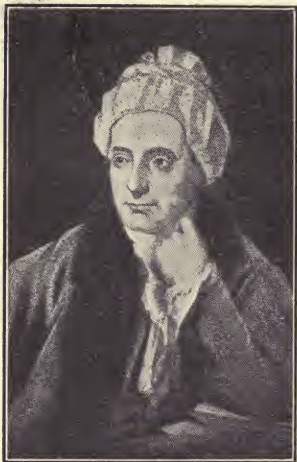


Stoke Pogis Churchyard

✓15. William Cowper (1731–1800) was born at Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, where his father was rector. He was educated at Westminster School and studied law in the Middle Temple, but at an early age developed mental trouble that interfered with an active career. He lived most of his life in quiet retirement writing hymns and miscellaneous poetry whenever he was free from recurrent attacks of insanity. His fiftieth birthday had passed before he published anything of importance. His most ambitious poem, *The Task*, appeared in 1785, and his blank-verse translation of Homer in 1791. Friends secured for him a pension of £300 in 1794, which assured his comfort during the few remaining years of his life. There is deep pathos in these beautiful lines:

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
 Long since; with many an arrow deep infix'd
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
 There was I found by One who had Himself
 Been hurt by archers.

Cowper's writing reflects a curious mixture of old and new poetical tradition. At times he produced the most conventional heroic couplets in the manner of an uninspired follower



William Cowper

of Pope; at other times he showed a quality of poetic diction and a sincere love of nature suggestive of Wordsworth. On the whole, however, the greater part of his poetry is reminiscent of the older age rather than indicative of the new. *The Task*, in which we find the best of his nature poetry, is a long poem in blank verse. The title was derived from the fact that Cowper asked one Lady Austen for a suitable subject, and she suggested the sofa, not because it was at all suitable, but as a task

to try his inventive powers. He accepted the challenge, but after describing the evolution of the sofa from the humble stool, he proceeded in rambling verse to discourse of nature, history, and philosophy — but not without frequent lapses into the earlier style. The poet who sang with yearning

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
 Some boundless contiguity of shade,
 Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
 Of unsuccessful or successful war
 Might never reach me more!

also wrote

Who loves a garden, loves a greenhouse too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.

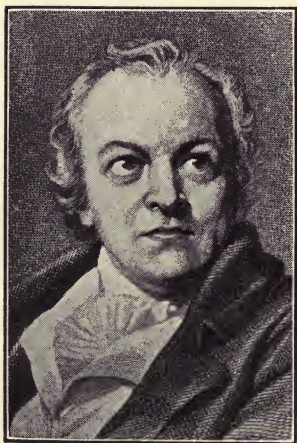
The merry ballad of *John Gilpin's Ride* assures Cowper's place among English poets, but it is at best a literary trifle. Among his more serious poems the most notable are *Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* and *The Castaway*. Like Gray, he was an admirable letter-writer in a leisurely age that was famous for its masters of that lost art. Most critics accept his letters as the best of his works. They not only reveal a delicate sense of humor and high imaginative power, but show how superbly his spirits rose above the heavy afflictions that fate had visited upon him.

16. George Crabbe (1754-1832) was much like Cowper in his literary work, although he lived nearly a generation later. He was a self-educated man, for some years servant to a country doctor, then a surgeon. He finally entered the Church and held various livings during his uneventful career. One of the curious facts about Crabbe's work is the survival of the heroic couplet long after it had lost general favor, but he managed to inject considerable modern feeling into the poems that he cast into that discredited mold. His earlier poems, *The Library* (1781), *The Village* (1783), and *The Newspaper* (1785), deal vigorously with the prosaic themes suggested by their titles. They abound in realistic and picturesque detail, but lack in poetic imagination. The significant note in Crabbe's work is his sincere sympathy for the lower classes. He himself had grown up in poverty and he knew whereof he wrote. Thus in *The Village* we read:

I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms
For him that grazes or for him that farms;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads, and dewy temples play;

While some with feeblers hands and fainter hearts,
 Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts;
 Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
 In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?

After a period of twenty years, during which he devoted himself to his clerical duties and published nothing, Crabbe again embarked upon a period of literary activity. He brought out *The Parish Register* (1807), *The Borough* (1810), *Tales in Verse* (1812), and *Tales of the Hall* (1819). There was little evidence in these later poems of any change in attitude on Crabbe's part as a result of the new development in poetry that had taken place between the two periods. Crabbe's work would perhaps be more highly appreciated if it were not judged as poetry, but as a series of realistic stories, mostly of English provincial life and incidentally written in an archaic verse form.



William Blake

17. William Blake (1757–1827) was the most original of all the Early Romantic writers. He belonged to no age and followed no fashion. He was born in London and spent most of his life there. After serving an apprenticeship with an engraver, he took up engraving as a means of livelihood and later conducted a printseller's shop. Although his chief business in life was drawing and engraving, he also devoted much time to the composition of mystical books in which

he posed as a prophet. His reputation as a poet rests upon three slender volumes produced early in his career: *Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Songs of*

Experience (1794). These quaint, delicate little pieces are quite unlike anything else in our literature. Some of them are at once readily understood by a child and too subtle for many a philosopher. There is a charming simplicity about them and an unrestrained play of the imagination that is in harmony with the happy age of childhood. Their defects, as well as their graces, spring from Blake's own childlike nature. The following poem is typical:

Ah! Sunflower! weary of time
 Who countest the steps of the sun,
 Seeking after that sweet golden prime
 Where the traveller's journey is done;
 Where the Youth pined away with desire,
 And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
 Arise from their graves, and aspire
 Where my sunflower wishes to go!

No reader of Blake is likely to forget *The Lamb*, *The Evening Star*, or *To the Muses*; nor must we overlook the splendid

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
 In the forest of the night.
 What immortal hand or eye
 Framed thy fearful symmetry?

with its memorable concluding stanza — a stroke of poetic genius:

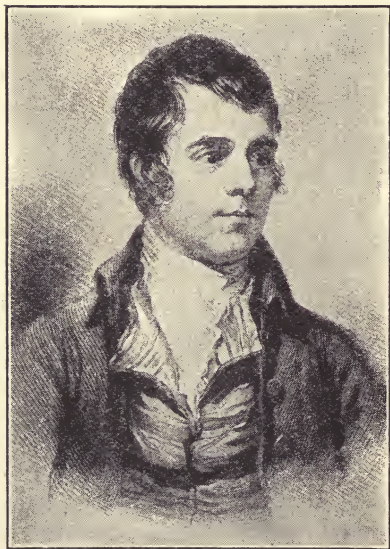
When the stars threw down their spears,
 And watered Heaven with their tears,
 Did He smile His work to see?
 Did He who made the lamb make thee?

With Blake's mystical works and his weird prophecies we are not particularly concerned. He was always seeing visions and recording them either in word or in design. "I have very little of Mr. Blake's company," once said his devoted wife, "he is always in Paradise." Those who were not acquainted with Blake pronounced him mad; those who knew him well knew better. He lived in a dream-world

of his own creating. Now and then he accorded to his fellow-men a glimpse of what he had seen. He made no effort to please the reading public, and he cared little what others said about him. He was from first to last an eccentric individualist who did as he pleased. The world eventually accepted him as a poet with a message, and it still studies his quaint verses to find out their hidden meanings.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

18. A Tragic Life. Robert Burns was born in 1759 in a humble cottage near Alloway Kirk, about two miles south



Robert Burns

of Ayr, in Scotland. He was the eldest of the seven children of William Burns, a man of stern morality and considerable intelligence. Robert received a fairly good elementary education and took up work on his father's farm. At twenty-three he undertook business as a flax-dresser at Irvine, but made a failure of the venture and returned to the farm. Two years later he and his brother Gilbert took up farming at Mossgiel, but this

likewise turned out badly. He accepted a clerkship in Jamaica and to defray the expenses of his journey thither decided to publish a volume of songs and poems

that he had composed during his working hours at the plow or in the farmyard. This edition was printed at Kilmarnock in 1786 and has since become one of the most treasured of books. Encouraged by the cordial reception of his *Poems*, he gave up all thought of emigrating to Jamaica and went to Edinburgh instead, where he brought out a second edition in 1787. He was well received in literary circles during the first winter in Edinburgh, but unfortunately he yielded to intemperance and shocked his refined hosts by his habits. When he next visited the city, he was so coldly treated that he soon returned to his home, angered by what he considered the fickleness of the public.

In 1788 Burns married Jean Armour, one of his many sweethearts, and undertook to manage a farm at Ellisland, near Dumfries. As

farming once more proved an unprofitable business, he secured a position as exciseman or gauger, for which he received the meager pay of £50 per annum. This position, moreover, increased his opportunities for dissipation. After a few tragic years of declining health he died at



Burns's Birthplace

Dumfries, 1796, at the age of thirty-seven. During the last days of his wretched life he had to conquer his pride to the extent of writing the most pathetic letters to his friends, begging them for a few pounds to keep him from being sent to jail for debt. His beautiful song, "O wert thou in the cauld blast," was among the last to be written during that final distressing period of his career.

19. **The Poetry of Burns.** There is no bewildering list of titles to consider in taking up the works of Burns. The best of his poetry will be found in the *Kilmarnock* edition, which includes not only the shorter lyrics that have become universally popular, but also *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, which is undoubtedly the finest of his longer poems. The scene depicts the home-coming of the cotter's family for the week-end reunion. There is the joyful greeting of the younger children; the exchange of local gossip; the welcoming of the eldest daughter's lover to the modest supper of porridge, milk, and cheese. The poem ends with the invoking of the Divine blessing upon the lowly family, so typical of the devout and hardy race of Scots:

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad.
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

The last line, quoted from Pope's *Essay on Man*, takes on a new meaning in Burns's fervent plea for humanity that characterizes *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. In that admirable Scotch idyl are reflected many of the traits of the new romanticism, including the interest in lowly lives, a devout religious spirit, and a deep contempt for hypocrisy and tyranny. In his later work, which was more carefully written, Burns was often less spontaneous. He was at his best when he wrote in the Scots dialect, which was his native tongue. Academic English flowed with a certain stiffness from his pen, whether in poetry or prose.

In Burns's longer poems, such as *The Jolly Beggars*, *The Address to the Deil*, and *Tam O'Shanter*, there is grim humor and much local color. The most familiar of these is the famous tale of Tam, who one night at the inn found the ale growing ever better, but finally mounted his horse for his dreary ride homeward in the storm. What a picture we

have of the witches' mad frolic in the graveyard "by Allo-way's auld haunted kirk," the mad dance to the piping of Old Nick while the shrouded dead hold candles aloft to light up the weird scene, and then the wild pursuit of poor Tam by the hellish spirits!

The shorter poems, however, are still more highly regarded. Among the best of his many love-poems are *The Banks o' Doon*, *Highland Mary*, *Afton Water*, and *To Mary in Heaven*. In them is echoed his passionate attachment to his beloved Highland sweetheart:

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream —
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

The love for nature revealed in so many of his lyrics is that of a singer who has lived close to nature and who is sincere in his emotion. His sympathy for the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r" or for the shivering little field-mouse would have been beyond the comprehension of Pope and his kind, except on the ground that Burns was a common fellow who was interested in low things. Throughout his poetry we find flashes of a larger philosophy explaining nature's kinship with man. If that kinship has been in any way disturbed, it is man's own fault. Thus to the field-mouse he declares:

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
An' fellow mortal!

But the man who sang so sweetly of love and of the world about him was also ready to chant the praises of the flowing bowl. His convivial songs were the offspring of a spirit

that was unfortunately too ready to drain a bumper in memory of John Barleycorn or to

Take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

There are other more laudable flights of his muse. His patriotic pride in Scotland, voiced again and again in his poems, gave us that trumpet-blast of freedom, *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, and the exalted rhapsody at the end of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. But Burns was not a narrow-minded patriot; he was essentially the poet of all humanity, for he sang a strain that all could understand. In his poetry he prayed for that spark of Nature's fire which would enable his homely muse to touch the heart — and his prayer was surely answered. He was eloquent in his denunciation of social injustice, of religious hypocrisy, of oppression in every form. To a generation that was loath to forego its worship of place and power, he proclaimed the watchword of a new democracy,

A man's a man for a' that.

Burns had lived and suffered in the midst of those whose wrongs he made known; his proud soul had experienced the contempt and the slights of those in high places. There is a hint of the impending social revolution in his

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings.

Through the genius of the poor Scotch plowman the world had its warning of the coming democracy quite as definitely as in the learned treatises of the French philosophers who helped to mold public opinion before the breaking of the storm.

CHAPTER X

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

1. New Social Ideals. As the eighteenth century drew to a close, the various influences that had begun to make themselves felt in a small way during the Early Romantic period grew in strength. Men perceived that the superficial brilliancy of Augustan or classical tradition had no enduring worth. Those in the upper circles of society had known the best that life could offer; those below were existing under intolerable conditions. The rank and file of humanity were suffering from abuses that demanded correction. For a time the aristocrats disregarded the manifest trend of events as foreshadowed in the writings of the French essayists and in such English poets as Collins, Goldsmith, and most important of all, Burns. Even when the nobility realized that an intellectual revolution was under way, they did not foresee that a social and a political revolution were also at hand.

The oppressed dreamed visions of a new humanity and a new democracy; the oppressors went serenely on, leading their shallow, frivolous lives as they pleased, and passing the burden of their extravagance on to the working classes in the form of heavy taxation. Far-sighted statesmen and prophetic poets uttered their warnings in vain. Europe saw a great experiment in democracy getting a chance in America; it meditated over the doctrines and principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution. Europe likewise clamored for political equality and the "rights of man." There were riots in London as

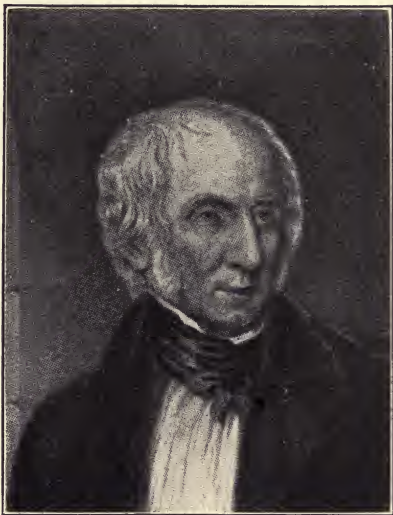
well as on the Continent. Aristocracy still hoped, rather foolishly, that the new impulses might be smothered. Then, on the fourteenth of July, 1789 — a fateful day in modern history — the people of Paris seized and destroyed the Bastille. The French Revolution was at last an accomplished fact.

2. The French Revolution. With the breaking of the storm all social traditions were swept aside, and in the course of a few bloody years European society was made anew. In spite of the warnings of Burke, many of the younger literary men of England sympathized with the principles of the Revolution and saw in it the dawning of a better day for all mankind. The later excesses of the revolutionists, when they sent the French King and Queen to the guillotine and instituted the Reign of Terror, brought about a revulsion of feeling. For the next twenty years England had to face the new menace of Napoleon and his attempts to undermine her power. The great victories of Trafalgar and Waterloo revived much of the Elizabethan spirit that came in the wake of the Armada.

In the midst of the great political upheaval came the real triumph of romanticism in the world of literature. The spirit of the new age spelled enthusiasm, earnestness, and sincerity. Once more England had recourse to poetry to express her deep emotion over the changing order of society. Literature abandoned the heroic couplet, the polished figures, the stock phrases of the eighteenth century, and voiced its new message in the simple, clear-cut language of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott. A little later came the work of Byron, Shelley, and Keats, all of whom were much influenced by the principles of the Revolution. It was no longer an age in which one leader could dominate the intellectual life as in the days of Dryden, Pope, or Johnson. There was, however, one writer whose work best represented the conditions of the romantic triumph — and that was Wordsworth.

✓ WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

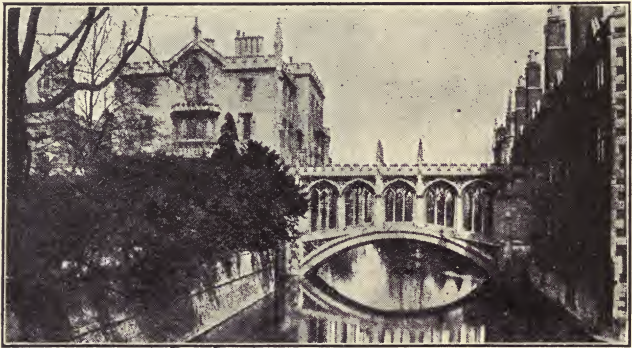
3. A Lover of Nature. In the little town of Cockermouth, Cumberland, not far from the lovely Lake District of north-western England, William Wordsworth was born in 1770. His father, John Wordsworth, was an attorney and land-agent. William was sent to school in the village of Hawkshead and spent much of his boyhood in the midst of the picturesque country that he was later to describe so graphically in his poetry. His mother died when he was eight years old and his father died five years later. Even as a boy Wordsworth pondered over the manifestations of nature all about him and tried to establish their significance to humankind. Two uncles undertook to look after his education and at seventeen he entered St. John's College, Cambridge.



William Wordsworth

His career at the University was not eventful. Wordsworth had but little interest in academic subjects as they were taught, and he was graduated four years later without distinction. During his last vacation, which was spent in Switzerland and Italy, he had his first opportunity to behold nature in her wilder aspects and to look upon mountain scenery far more majestic than that of the Lake Country. He spent about a year in France after his gradua-

tion and then returned to England to settle down in Penrith with his sister Dorothy. Shortly afterwards he published two slender volumes of verse, *The Evening Walk* (1793) and *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), neither of which has any definite indication of the greater message that was to come. It is noteworthy that in both poems Wordsworth used the heroic couplet, but in spirit they are more modern than such choice of meter would indicate. In 1794 a young friend named Raisley Calvert died, bequeathing £900 to Wordsworth.



St. John's College, Cambridge

Although the sum was not large, it made the poet independent and enabled him to devote his time entirely to literature.

4. Meeting with Coleridge. Shortly after he removed with his sister to Racedown, in Dorsetshire, he made the acquaintance of Coleridge and a life-long friendship developed between them. Dorothy Wordsworth was a sympathetic woman of unusual personality, and she influenced both her brother and Coleridge by her critical comment on their work. When Coleridge moved to Nether Stowey, Wordsworth took a home at Alfoxden, about three miles away, and the two poets spent much of their time together. During the spring of 1798 they worked on a joint volume of

poems which they had planned to defray the expenses of a trip to Germany; as it turned out, this volume was destined to be one of the most important in the history of English poetry. *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), as they called it, appeared anonymously and attracted little favorable comment from the critics, but the people bought it eagerly, and several new editions were needed during the next few years. Wordsworth's contributions included his *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, *Lines Written in Early Spring*, and the well-known *We Are Seven*. Virtually all the principles of Wordsworth's poetic creed are expressed in those few poems. Coleridge's contributions were few, but *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, his best-known poem, had the place of honor at the beginning of the collection. Just about the time the *Lyrical Ballads* were published, the two poets, accompanied by Dorothy Wordsworth, sailed for Germany. The Wordsworths did not enjoy the winter spent there and were glad to return to England in spring. They settled at Grasmere in the Lake District, occupying Dove Cottage, which is now one of the notable literary shrines of the country.

5. Life in the Lake District. In 1802 Wordsworth married his cousin Mary Hutchinson and thereafter lived a quiet, uneventful life, surrounded by his family. During the first few years of his married life he wrote many of the beautiful sonnets that rank among the finest specimens in that form in English. Milton alone among sonneteers is comparable with Wordsworth at his best. The later poet's mastery of the form is best illustrated in such sonnets as those entitled *Mutability*; *Composed upon Westminster Bridge; London, 1802* (his sonnet on Milton); *Composed upon the Beach near Calais*; and the admirable unnamed sonnet beginning "The world is too much with us." Wordsworth would have been entitled to high rank among the English poets if we had only his sonnets on which to base his claims.

His *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* (1806) is one of the supreme achievements in our intellectual poetry. Wordsworth's meditations over the most interesting of all problems — the relation of man to the great universe beyond the earth — are replete with passages of solemn majesty and memorable cadence. Few of his later works vie with this splendid ode for perfect correlation of form and content, and for real artistic worth. The essence of Wordsworth's philosophy is summed up in the sonorous fifth stanza of that notable poem:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

A long autobiographical poem, *The Excursion*, which he published in nine books in 1814, contains some lofty stretches of verse, but it is very uneven and tedious in parts. A year later he collected his *Poetical Works* and wrote for the volume an important Preface that ranks as one of our significant essays in literary criticism.

An appointment as Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland at a salary of £400 enabled Wordsworth to move to a

larger home at Rydal Mount, near Ambleside, which he occupied for the rest of his long life. He was fond of travel during his later years, and in 1828, precisely thirty years after his first visit to Germany, he made a tour of the Rhine with Coleridge. Although England was slow in recognizing the genius of the writer whom she later acknowledged to be the leading poet of the century, honors began to come to him from various sources. Oxford conferred upon him in 1839 the degree of D.C.L., and in 1843 he succeeded Southey as Poet Laureate. However, he wrote little of any importance during the remaining years. He died in 1850 and was buried in Grasmere Churchyard beside his favorite daughter Dora. In the same year was published *The Prelude*, another long poem in which he had much to say concerning his own early life and development.



Dove Cottage

6. Significance of Wordsworth. Few poets have written as much verse as Wordsworth; virtually none wrote verse that is more unequal. At his best he ranks with our very greatest names; at his worst he is incredibly bad. The reticence that marked his social life did not extend to his writings. He composed so steadily that much of his work, in the nature of things, was bound to be commonplace. Hence he is a poet to be studied in selections made by competent critics — a task that was well done by Matthew Arnold and by several later editors. To those who become familiar with the great bulk of his verse the limitations of Wordsworth are soon evident. His lack of humor permitted him to print uninspired poems that aroused the ridicule of Byron and other irreverent contemporaries, and caused the

author much annoyance. Because of his reticence and his preference for solitude he worked within a somewhat restricted range of human experience, which cramped his appreciation for the complexity of human character, but within his own range his achievement stands supreme.

In early life Wordsworth was a liberal, in full sympathy with the principles of the French Revolution. The ghastly excesses of the Reign of Terror and its apostles of blood brought about a revulsion of feeling. He became conservative and in his later years even provoked the censure of the younger liberal poets. In Wordsworth we find, however, the full development of that fine sympathy for his fellow-men foreshadowed in the work of Burns and a few others. This trait is shown at its best in his poem *Michael*, an impressive pastoral tale narrating in language almost Biblical in its simplicity the tragedy of a poor shepherd's household. Note how simply, yet effectively, he describes the old shepherd:

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.

Wordsworth's interpretation of child-life, as in *Lucy Gray* and *Alice Fell*, also strikes a new note in English literature. His chief claim to glory, however, lies in his achievement as the greatest of all nature poets. He was not only keenly alive to the beauty of what he saw about him, but he interpreted it with a spiritual insight that has never been excelled. What earlier poets of nature at best described with fidelity and sincere appreciation, he glorified by interpreting the significance of that manifestation. Through-

out life he contended that poetry should be written in the natural language of men — not in a fanciful literary diction. His simplicity of speech sometimes prevents the hasty reader from recognizing the subtlety of thought behind the mere words. The lover of Wordsworth feels that the poet's conception of nature is like an inspiration. He had the divine gift of the seer who can penetrate beyond the veil that limits the human eye. From his youth Wordsworth felt that poetry was for him a consecration. In his autobiographical poems we can learn how seriously he regarded this solemn duty and how faithfully he labored to live up



Scene in the Lake Country

to that obligation. His sense of responsibility helped to develop that fine ethical spirit that pervades all his work and gives him a conspicuous place among the great teachers of mankind.

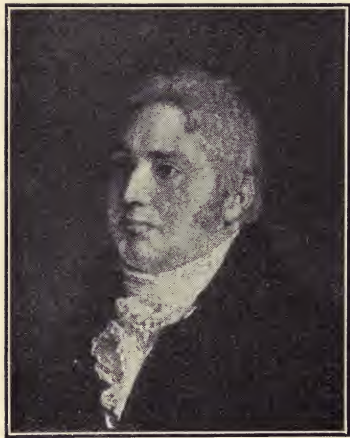
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SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

7. A Disordered Life. In Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, there was born in 1772 the thirteenth and youngest of the children of the Reverend John Coleridge. The boyhood of Samuel Taylor Coleridge was precocious and was charac-

terized by extensive reading of ballads and romances. His life, unlike that of Wordsworth, was eventful and full of tragedy. When he was nine his father died and Samuel was entered at Christ's Hospital, the famous old "Blue-coat School" established in London by the boy-king Edward VI. Charles Lamb was a student there at the same time; in later years he wrote in his memorable essay *Christ's*

Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago a vivid memorial of those early associations:

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — Samuel Taylor Coleridge — Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration . . . while the walls of old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity boy!

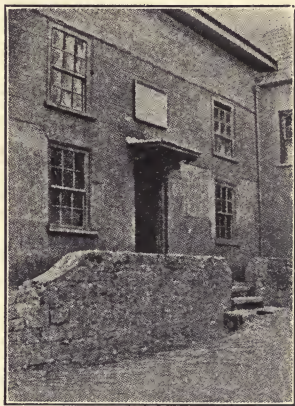


Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Coleridge was the recognized intellectual leader of the group and won the Exhibition Scholarship to college. In 1791 he matriculated at Jesus College, Cambridge, but soon began to neglect his studies. Two years later he became involved in some financial difficulties, ran away from college and enlisted in the King's Dragoons under the assumed name of Silas Tomkyn Comberbach. As soon as his relatives learned of his whereabouts they secured his discharge from service. He returned to college in 1794, but left soon after without a degree. During a visit to Oxford he met Robert Southey, and together they planned a social scheme for an ideally governed commonwealth — a pantisocracy, they called it —

to be established on the banks of the Susquehanna, in Pennsylvania. The project failed, because they lacked funds, but both of the visionaries found themselves married and brothers-in-law before the scheme was reluctantly abandoned. Coleridge married (1795) Sara Fricker, the sister of Edith Fricker, whom Southey married. Both young men quickly turned to literary work to support their respective wives. Coleridge gave lectures, published his first volume of *Poems* (1796), and established a newspaper called *The Watchman*, which failed after the tenth number appeared.

8. The Dark Years. The story of Coleridge's first acquaintance with Wordsworth and their joint labors in producing the *Lyrical Ballads* has already been related. In addition to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the *Lyrical Ballads* included three other pieces by Coleridge. These were *The Foster-Mother's Tale*, *The Nightingale*, and *The Dungeon*. If the reviewers of those days failed to detect the merit of Wordsworth's *Lines at Tintern Abbey*, they could hardly be expected to realize the significance of *The Ancient Mariner* as a landmark in the history



Coleridge's Home, Nether Stowey

of English romantic poetry. Coleridge spent his time in Germany more profitably than Wordsworth did. He first acquired a thorough knowledge of the language, then attended courses in the University of Göttingen. The first important work after returning to England was his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1800), a fine poetic drama which some critics estimate more highly than the German original. About

this time Coleridge yielded to a temptation that almost wrecked his career and gave him an undeserved reputation for indolence and irresolution. The use of opium, which he had first taken to relieve neuralgia, became a fixed, unconquerable habit, sapping his energies and interfering with the completion of numerous literary projects. His friends hoped that he might benefit by a change of climate and sent him abroad. He visited Malta and Rome in 1804-1806, returning much improved and once more ready to take up his work. He conducted a paper called *The Friend* in 1809-1810, but his return to the opium-habit made it impossible to continue its publication regularly. His lectures on Shakespeare and other writers in 1810-1813 attracted much attention. The lecture-rooms were crowded to the doors, and eager listeners even perched on the window-sills while Coleridge proceeded in rhapsodic inspiration to pour forth his critical ideas. The play of *Remorse* (1813), which was produced at Drury Lane through Byron's influence, was successful and brought Coleridge some £400, but unfortunately this money merely enabled the afflicted poet to become more hopelessly enslaved to opium.

9. Years of Peace. In 1816 Coleridge recognized that some decisive steps must be taken to overcome the habit that held such mastery over him. He put himself under the care of Dr. Gillman, a surgeon of Highgate in the northern part of London. For the remaining eighteen years of his life he continued to live in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Gillman, both of whom ministered faithfully to the needs of their notable guest. Under the influence of these good friends he regained his will-power and devoted himself once more with energy to his literary work. The results during the next few years were surprising. He published his lovely fragmentary poem *Christabel* (1816), and prepared a collected edition of his poems under the title *Sibylline Leaves* (1817). He also wrote an extensive literary autobiography entitled

Biographia Literaria (1817), which contains some of his most illuminating criticism. His last lecture course was given in 1818; thereafter he devoted himself to philosophical study and to the writing of books dealing with religion and philosophy. The most important of these was *Aids to Reflection* (1825). A group of admiring friends and students gathered about him during the last period of his life and listened to his remarkable conversations, which were really monologues, on history, philosophy, and literature. Much of his *Table-Talk*, as it was called, was carefully taken down and published after his death. Hundreds of books with his annotations or *marginalia* written in pencil or ink on their margins attest to his industry during those later studious years. He died at Dr. Gillman's home in 1834 and was buried in the Highgate Churchyard.

10. The Works of Coleridge. Most critics concede that Coleridge is one of the great figures in literature. He was a man of unusual genius, remarkable for the high quality of his work in so many fields of literary activity. As a poet he produced a large volume of verse, but his fame rests mainly upon a few supremely beautiful pieces: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*; to which may be added *Dejection*, an *Ode*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Ode to France*, and *Fears in Solitude*. It is noteworthy that most of these were written during the years of his close association with Wordsworth, yet they differ essentially from Wordsworth's manner. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* we have the most wonderful of all supernatural ballads — a stirring, imaginative story, marvelously told. Coleridge developed all the graces of the old ballad meter for this weird tale of sin and retribution. Like the Wedding-guest of the ballad, we are fascinated by the venerable man as he relates the story of his voyage across the line and into the polar seas; we tremble at his wanton killing of the albatross and shudder at the evidences of the Great Spirit's

displeasure. The description of the phantom ship with its ghastly crew is hardly more effective as a piece of poetic imagery than the account of the curse imposed upon the guilty mariner. When the spell is broken and we learn the story of the return voyage, the poem rises to great heights. The climax at the sinking of the ship is most dramatic. All is narrated with unmatched skill and with unforgettable



Drawing by Noel Paton

The Ancient Mariner

phrasing. As we leave the ancient mariner we take into our hearts the lesson of his last words to the Wedding-guest:

He prayeth best, who loveth best.
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Christabel, a lovely fragment of a medieval tale, is steeped in the faërie atmosphere of another world. In its strange,

irregular cadences Coleridge represents the eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil as personified in the innocent Christabel and in the mysterious snake-woman Geraldine. The story becomes somewhat incoherent in the second part, and Coleridge despaired of bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. *Kubla Khan* is a more mystical fragment, especially significant for its Oriental imagery and haunting sound-effects. Note the strange musical quality of these lines:

Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Such poetry should be felt rather than understood. Coleridge declared he had composed over two hundred lines of this poem while he was in a kind of dream-trance. On awakening he snatched paper and pen to put it down, but he was disturbed by a caller after he had written the fifty-four lines that survive; after the departure of the visitor he could not remember the rest of the poem.

In his fondness for the weird, the supernatural, and for unusual romantic themes, Coleridge differed essentially from his friend Wordsworth. Coleridge's treatment of nature was less philosophic, but more picturesque. Throughout his nature poetry there are flashes of imagery that are supreme in their kind. His poetic genius was as great as that of any writer of his age, but he squandered his talents in trifles and fragments. One admirer said that Coleridge's really excellent poetry might be bound up in twenty pages — but it should be bound in pure gold.

As a critic, Coleridge ranks in the very first class, especially in his interpretation of Shakespeare. In his lectures on Shakespeare he gave utterance to the most illuminating commentary on the intellectual and spiritual significance of

the great plays. He also did a great deal to arouse England's appreciation for the genius of Wordsworth. In the field of journalism he wrote much that is completely disregarded nowadays. For many years he contributed leading articles to the London newspapers. The best of these were collected by his daughter Sara Coleridge and published in three volumes as *Essays on His Own Times* (1850). As a philosopher, Coleridge had a wide range of interests. He not only made the idealistic German philosophy familiar to English readers, but was himself an acute, original thinker. It was his great ambition to formulate a system of thought that would embrace all human knowledge, but he never carried out his plan.

Coleridge is especially notable for the stimulating influence of his work on his contemporaries and on later writers. Lack of will-power resulted in his leaving many important projects unfinished or hardly begun. The state of indolence brought on by indulgence in opium was largely responsible for the fragmentary character of much of his work. His casual hints in his lectures, his letters, and his table-talk were the stepping stones whereby others rose to great heights. In spite of his failure to make the most of his remarkable gifts, Coleridge accomplished more than enough to assure his position as a great poet and as one of the most influential thinkers of his age.

11. **Robert Southey (1774–1843).** The caustic critics of *The Edinburgh Review*, in their effort to ridicule the work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, referred to them contemptuously as the “Lake Poets” because the families of all three poets were living for a time in the charming Lake District of northwestern England. The term is not a happy one, and it is likely to be misleading if it gives the impression that there was any general similarity in the work of the three men who constituted the “Lake School.” Southey was the least important member of the trio, and his work

is generally neglected to-day. He was born at Bristol in 1774, and was educated at Westminster School and at Balliol College, Oxford. After 1803 he lived in the Lake District, where for a time he nobly supported Coleridge's family as well as his own. In addition to many shorter poems, he wrote a series of huge epics, such as *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), *Madoc* (1805), *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), and *Roderick* (1814). Of these arid stretches of verse Byron said, "They will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten — but not till then." Although Southey became Poet Laureate in 1813 and held the post until his death in 1843, he did not produce much poetry during that period. He had virtually written himself out; literature was a mere trade for him. His complete works would fill over a hundred volumes. For *The Quarterly Review* alone he wrote a hundred and fifty long articles. He also wrote a *History of Brazil* and biographies of Wesley and Cowper. Amid the great mass of his prose work there is only one rather brief biography that has become a classic — his *Life of Nelson* (1813). This was expanded from one of his articles and is a notable specimen of direct, entertaining narrative. It presents a most intimate picture of the great naval hero and tells in an almost perfect style with all the glamor of romance the story of the beloved admiral's career. Even Byron, who rarely had anything good to say of Southey, expressed his admiration for this ideal biography. No one since Southey has succeeded in writing a better account of Nelson's stirring exploits. Among Southey's short poems the only ones that retain any popularity are *The Inchcape*



Robert Southey

Rock, The Battle of Blenheim, and the little poem descriptive of his library, beginning

My days among the dead are passed.

Southey should always be remembered with respect for his scholarship and patient industry, as well as for his cheerful acceptance of the responsibilities thrust upon him by his brilliant but erratic brother-in-law Coleridge.

✓ SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

12. A Romantic Youth. Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771 and was the ninth of the twelve children of a



Sir Walter Scott

Scotch solicitor. In view of Walter's lameness and delicate health in childhood, he was permitted to follow his own bent on his grandfather's farm, where he developed a great love for outdoor life, and heard many popular ballads and tales of adventure. On one occasion he declaimed the old ballad of *Hardicanute* so vociferously that the parish clergyman who was conversing nearby said he might as well speak in the cannon's mouth as where that child was.

After attending the Edinburgh High School he proceeded to the University. Although he served for a time in his father's

office and later practiced law on his own account, he was always more warmly concerned with literature. In 1797 he married Charlotte Carpenter, a young lady of French descent, who enjoyed an income of £500. Two years later he was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, which office carried a stipend of £300 in payment for nominal duties. Thus he became free to devote himself more completely to a literary career. His first important undertaking was a collection of legendary ballads and songs entitled *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802), which was inspired by his early devotion to Percy's *Ballads*. Next he produced a remarkable series of narrative poems that became very popular: *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *Don Roderick* (1811), and *Rokeby* (1812). These are among our finest specimens of romantic tales told in verse. They were less significant than the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge, but they sold in enormous editions and did much to cultivate a popular taste for romantic poetry of the better sort. *Marmion* is a spirited story of Scotland in the picturesque days of Flodden Field; its succession of romantic adventures culminates with a fine description of that battle. *Lochinvar's Ride* is the best known of its lyrical interludes. *The Lady of the Lake* was even more popular than *Marmion*. It unfolds an idyllic love-story in the days when Scottish kings mingled incognito with their subjects. The scene is chiefly laid in the lovely country about Loch Katrine in the Western Highlands.



Loch Katrine

Some of Scott's best songs, as well as the notable ballad of

Alice Brand, are to be found in its pages. *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* are still widely read and considered most desirable to cultivate in young readers a genuine love for poetic literature. After the success of his first poem Scott became secretly interested in the printing business of James Ballantyne in Edinburgh, and shared in the profits that came to that firm through the popularity of his poetry. In 1812 he bought a modest property of one hundred acres at Abbotsford on the Tweed, and by later additions developed it into a baronial estate of a thousand acres. He also built on his estate the imposing mansion in which he delighted to entertain his friends. Several less important poems that followed *Rokeby* were not received with favor, and Scott himself was quite conscious of their inferiority. Moreover, Lord Byron had by that time become the most popular poet in England, and Scott wisely determined not to contest Byron's supremacy. He decided henceforth to



Abbotsford

devote himself to prose fiction and took up the manuscript of a novel which he had begun nine years earlier and which he had accidentally found while searching for some fishing-tackle.

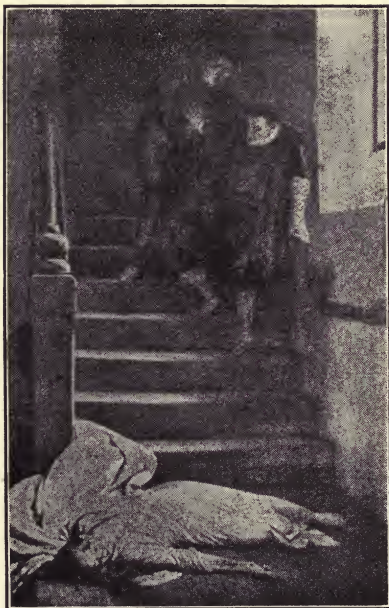
13. The Waverley Novels. In 1814 he published anonymously the novel *Waverley*, which was the first of the great series of

twenty-nine novels produced during the remaining eighteen years of his life. Few writers have ventured to cover so extensive a range as is represented in the wealth of historical fiction that came from his busy pen. *Waverley*,

which gave its name to the entire series, is a spirited story dealing with the attempt of the Pretender to recover the English throne in 1745. *Guy Mannering* (1815), which followed, is one of our best pictures of Scottish life. It contains the remarkable character of Meg Merrilies, the gypsy. *The Antiquary* (1816) is a fine story of Scottish life during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Coleridge declared it had one of the best plots in literature. *Old Mortality* (1816) offers a memorable picture of the old Scotch Covenanters and has several spirited battle scenes. *Rob Roy* (1817) is a story of the heroic Scotch outlaw. *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) is a pathetic tale dealing with humble persons in Scotland during the eighteenth century. It gives graphic pictures of middle-class and low life in old Edinburgh and has an effective account of the midnight assault on the sinister Tolbooth. The story is based upon an actual instance of a devoted young Scotch woman who walked all the way to London to plead for her sister's life. The heroine, Jeanie Deans, is the finest among the women that figure in the Waverley Novels, and this story is usually accepted as the best of the series. In his next work Scott turned abruptly from a setting in his native land and produced *Ivanhoe* (1819), perhaps the most popular of all his novels, with its vivid portrayal of the period of Richard Cœur de Lion and of the clash in England between the Saxons and the Normans.

In 1820 the "Wizard of the North," as Scott had come to be known among his admirers, had the honor of being the first to be knighted by the new King George IV. During the same year he wrote the two novels, *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*, which deal with the ill-fated Mary, Queen of Scots. *Kenilworth* (1821), deservedly one of the most popular of the Waverley Novels, relates the sad story of Amy Robsart and the jealous intrigues of Queen Elizabeth. *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) gives an interesting picture of

the reign of James I and tells a story in which that queer monarch plays an important part. *Peveril of the Peak* (1823) is a less successful tale, depicting life during the reign of Charles II. *Quentin Durward* (1824) ranks among the very best of the novels and is an absorbing story of the times of Louis XI in France, with the sinister figure of



Painting by Yeames

The Death of Amy Robsart

Tristan l'Ermite as an important character in the action. *Redgauntlet* (1824) is another fine story and deals with the adventures of the Young Pretender in Scotland. *The Talisman* (1825), a story of the Crusades, is especially popular among Scott's younger readers.

14. A Turn in Fortune. During the period 1820-1825 Scott enjoyed the rewards of literary fame and of material prosperity to the utmost. He was, though anonymously, the most popular

novelist of the day, and the public was ever expectant for a new book by "the author of *Waverley*." In his palatial home at Abbotsford, Sir Walter was a gracious host to his many distinguished visitors. Then, in 1826, there came a sharp turn in his fortunes. The publishing firm in which he was interested failed and Scott found himself financially ruined. Instead of pleading bankruptcy,

as many a man would have done to shift part of his burden, he assumed, at the age of fifty-five, the full amount of the debt amounting to £117,000. From that day until his death he worked heroically and incessantly at new literary undertakings to pay off his creditors. An almost incredible succession of books came rapidly from his pen. *Woodstock* (1826), the last of his important novels, had been started before the financial crash. It deals with the closing days of the Protectorate and the Restoration of Charles II. Within two years Scott had earned nearly £40,000. A *Life of Napoleon* (1827) in nine volumes alone brought him £18,000. His later novels, including *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), *Count Robert of Paris* (1831), and *Castle Dangerous* (1831), reveal the weariness of an overworked mind, but are noteworthy monuments to an honorable man. Under the stress of the great exertion Scott suffered a paralytic stroke in 1830 from which he never fully recovered. He once more took up residence at Abbotsford, but as a broken man. His friends persuaded him to give up writing for a time and to take a trip to the Mediterranean in the hope that his health might thus be restored. The British Admiralty furnished one of its warships to convey Sir Walter to Malta and then to Naples. Conscious of the fact that his financial obligations were not yet fully discharged, he grew restless, and in 1832 made a hurried return to Abbotsford, where he died a few months later. He was laid to rest in the romantic ruins of Dryburgh Abbey. The balance of his debt was finally paid off in 1847 by the income resulting from the sale of his works.

15. Character of Scott. In many respects the career of Sir Walter Scott typified all that was best in the conception of the old-school English gentleman. He once said, "I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit." His biography written (1838) by his son-in-law, John Gib-

son Lockhart, is a masterly book of its kind, second only to Boswell's *Johnson* in merit and interest. Scott's contribution to English fiction is most important. He wrote with the skilled confidence of one who has found the proper medium for expression. He not only created the historical novel, as we know it, but definitely established the novel as the leading literary form. Since his day its supremacy has



Dryburgh Abbey

never been challenged. Few writers have approached him in sheer narrative skill, although it must be admitted that at times he wrote carelessly and that most of his characters, though described with a wealth of detail, are rather superficial. Scott did not possess the patience nor perhaps the talent to draw them with the insight that certain later novelists display. He cared little for love-stories; *The Bride of Lammermoor* is his only

novel of that sort. The rest are tales of adventure, replete with incident and action. He was especially successful in his graphic presentation of historical characters, many of whom live in our memories because of his vivid delineations, not because of any descriptions by formal historians. Moreover, English fiction is under lasting obligation to Scott for establishing such a high moral tone in his work. Most of our earlier novelists reflected the coarseness of life in their pages; in Scott the narrative throughout is clean and inspiring.

JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817)

16. A Quaint Realist. There is not in English literature another life quite as uneventful as that of Jane Austen. She was born at Steventon, Hampshire, in 1775, as the seventh of the eight children of the Reverend George Austen. Her only education was the private training that would be accorded in the home circle to a clergyman's daughter in her day. Her life was that of a middle-class girl who had to look after the usual household affairs. The novels that we value so highly to-day were undertaken to beguile the tedium of the domestic duties that fell to her lot. *Pride and Prejudice*, which is regarded as her best work, was written when she was twenty-two, but was not published until 1813. It is admired as much for its witty delineation of such characters as Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and Mr. Collins as for the tangled love-affairs of Elizabeth Bennett and her proud Darcy. As a picture of provincial life in days when aristocratic lineage was more highly esteemed than now, *Pride and Prejudice* is an invaluable contribution to literary art. *Sense and Sensibility* was written in 1797-1798 and appeared in 1809. The family moved to Bath in 1801, but after the death of her father four years later they returned to Southampton. *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816) were more elaborate stories



Jane Austen

and are less generally read, although the warmest admirers of Jane Austen regard enthusiasm for *Emma* as the touchstone of their cult. All the novels were published anonymously and Miss Austen never acknowledged her authorship of them. An appreciative notice of *Emma* in *The Quarterly Review* was really the beginning of her fame. She died in 1817 after a lingering illness and was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Two other novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, were published after her death. They show the same simplicity of plot and treatment as her early works. *Northanger Abbey* is especially interesting for its gentle



Winchester Cathedral

burlesque of the manner of Mrs. Radcliffe and other purveyors of "tales of terror." *Persuasion* was her last work and was written during her final illness.

Unlike the romantic novelists who drew freely upon their imagination for the turbulent scenes and exciting adventures depicted in their novels, Jane Austen wisely chose the quiet, middle-class domestic life of the Hampshire villages with which she was most familiar. Her characters disclose their natures in what appears to be the most casual, everyday sort of conversation, yet frequently there is a neat bit of irony or satire which the author permits the reader to note for himself. Those who are carried away by the dash and brilliancy of Scott's romances and then turn to Jane Austen's serene pictures of English provincial life must be careful not to underestimate her worth. Within her own narrow range she

is supreme. Scott himself spoke with frank enthusiasm of her "exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting," and admitted with equal frankness that he lacked that fine gift. He knew that her intimate, sympathetic character-studies of her age would ultimately be more highly esteemed than many of his own hastily sketched personages. The better sort of novelist to-day is more eager to achieve the realistic art of Jane Austen than the romantic art of Scott.

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

17. A Tragic Background. In London, between Fleet Street and the Thames, there is an irregular group of buildings called the Temple, marking the site of the lodge of the crusading Knights Templars, but now the abode of barristers and law students. Within its precincts Oliver Goldsmith was laid to rest in 1774. Less than a year later Charles Lamb, the son of a lawyer's servant, was born in one of its humble back rooms. Throughout his life he was a city man who loved London and delighted to sing the praises of its streets, its shops, and its historic nooks. At the age of nine he was sent to Christ's Hospital, where he made the acquaintance of Coleridge and began a friendship that lasted throughout life. He left the school at fourteen and entered the service of the South Sea House.



Charles Lamb

Three years later he became a clerk for the East India Company and remained in their employ for thirty-three years. A terrible domestic tragedy clouded his life. In 1796, his sister Mary, during a fit of temporary insanity, stabbed their mother to death. Lamb undertook to become his afflicted sister's guardian and cared for her during the rest of his days.

His first literary efforts were rather incidental and reflected no intention to strive for serious recognition as a writer. He contributed a few poems to the volumes published by Coleridge in 1796 and 1797, and also wrote an unsuccessful tragedy, *John Woodvil* (1802), in the Elizabethan manner. His farce, *Mr. H.*, was produced at Drury Lane in 1805, but was condemned on the opening night. The audience hissed it roundly; so did Lamb. His first real success was achieved in 1807, when he brought out his *Tales from Shakespeare*, written in collaboration with his sister Mary. No one else has ever related the stories of Shakespeare's great plays more skilfully. Lamb's *Tales*, as the book is usually called, remains to this day one of the most popular of books.

18. Later Works. A more ambitious undertaking was his *Specimens of Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare* (1808), in which he revealed his excellent literary taste and produced an anthology that is still valued by those who have not the time to read the Elizabethan drama extensively. His comments accompanying the specimens helped to reawaken interest in the old playwrights. The prose writers of the seventeenth century were also very dear to him; many characteristics of their style are evident in his own quaint prose. In 1820 Lamb began to contribute to *The London Magazine* a series of essays, which he signed "Elia," on such familiar topics as whist-playing, beggars, bachelors, old china, poor relations, ears, gallantry, and All Fools' Day. Among the best of these delightful essays

were those entitled *The Praise of Chimney Sweepers*, *The Two Races of Men*, *Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading*, the lovely *Dream Children: a Reverie*, and, most famous of all, *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig*. These intimate papers possess that indefinable quality called charm; they are personal, chatty, humorous, tender, pathetic — all by turns as the subject developed. He drew tender pictures of dusky young sweeps sniffing the sweet odors ascending from bowls of sassafras tea; with merry humor he solemnly classified all mankind into those who borrow and those who lend, laying special stress on the borrowing and lending of books; he gossiped lovingly of the joys that come to the bibliophile; in *Dream Children* he gave us half-shy yet intimate reminiscences of his childhood, and more than a hint of his own blighted romance. For the admirer of Lamb this last-mentioned essay has more significance than the familiar *Dissertation*, in which he expounded the novel Chinese theory concerning the origin of roast pork. The *Essays of Elia* were published in book form in 1825, and a later series known as *Last Essays of Elia* appeared in 1833. In their collected form they now constitute Lamb's most important literary work. He retired in 1825 from his service with the East India Company and was able to live comfortably on the pension he received. His declining years were spent in pleasant association with his literary companions. Several of them wrote interesting descriptions of his small, frail figure standing on still frailer legs and surmounted by an earnest, wrinkled countenance with flashing eyes. They recorded how he stammered his sly jests and won his way into their hearts by his quaint humor. He related some of his later experiences in his essay, *The Superannuated Man*. The death of his life-long friend Coleridge in July, 1834, affected him so deeply that he could not attend the funeral. Lamb himself died before the end of that year and was buried in Edmonton Churchyard.

19. A Lover of Humanity. Much of Lamb's fine personality is manifested in the extensive correspondence which ranks him among the best of English letter-writers. We would all know more of a man who will write: "The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good turn by stealth and have it found out by accident," or who will describe himself as "a gentleman at large . . . below middle stature . . . stammers abominably . . . a small eater, but not a drinker . . . was a fierce smoker of tobacco; but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then an occasional puff."

Among English writers are some, like Shakespeare and Milton, who are worshiped for their genius; others, like Bacon and Johnson, who are respected for their learning; and others, like Addison and Pope, who are admired for their talents; but there is still a fourth class — those who are loved for their essential humanity. To this group belong such rare souls as Burns, Lamb, and Stevenson, of whom we treasure every letter, every memorial, every scrap of information that will bring them closer to us.

20. Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864) was a Warwickshire man, born in the same year as Lamb, but unlike the gentle Elia, he had an unusually long and tempestuous career. After receiving his early training at Rugby, he was sent to Trinity College, Oxford, but was rusticated a year later for firing a shot-gun at the shutters of a room nearby, where a party of noisy roisterers were disturbing him. His fantastic poem, *Gebir* (1798), although it contains many beautiful passages, was unsuccessful. He is known mainly for his *Imaginary Conversations* (1824–1829), in which noted historical persons in all ages of the world's history are represented in dialogue or as talking in groups. Much erudition and literary skill were devoted to the work, but it is no longer widely read. His *Pericles and Aspasia* (1836) is a series of imaginary letters between these two characters

and offers a vivid picture of the Golden Age of Athens. Throughout his life Landor was quarreling with his associates, his neighbors, and his own family. He once threw a cook out of the window, but regretted the action because the unfortunate man landed on a bed of favorite flowers. Dickens used Landor as the original for the character of Boythorn in *Bleak House*. Landor was much of a wanderer during his long career, but he spent many years in Italy and died in Florence.

It is one of the ironies of literature that this learned writer is mentioned mainly in association with the remarkable period covered by the eighty-nine years of his life. He was a lad of nine when Dr. Johnson died, yet he survived to see the best of Swinburne's early work and might have read the novels of Meredith. When Landor died, Sir James M. Barrie was four years old and Mr. William J. Locke was an infant. No other noteworthy career in English literature stretches over quite so remarkable a period as Landor's.

21. William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was a leading essayist and, next to Coleridge, the most important literary critic of his age. He was born in Maidstone, Kent, and spent part of his boyhood in the United States. His earliest writings were philosophical and speculative in character, but about 1814 he began to contribute to *The Edinburgh Review* and soon won recognition for his literary and dramatic criticism. In 1817 he published his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* and *The Round Table*, the latter being written in collaboration with Leigh Hunt. He delivered important *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818) and *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1819) which were afterwards published. *The Spirit of the Age*, which contains some of his best criticism, appeared in 1825. He devoted his later years to a comprehensive *Life of Napoleon* (1828-1830) in four volumes, but that work, like Scott's similar venture, has long since been superseded.

22. **Leigh Hunt (1784–1859)** was educated at Christ's Hospital and became a journalist. He edited *The Examiner* (1808) and *The Reflector* (1810). In 1813 he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for libeling the Prince Regent as "a fat Adonis of fifty." Literary men sympathized with him as a victim of unjust laws. Byron, Lamb, and others visited him in prison. He continued to edit *The Examiner* from his cell. After his release he entertained Shelley at his home and brought about the first meeting between Shelley and Keats. His work in literature and journalism continued with unabated vigor throughout his long life. His ignorance of mathematics (even of the multiplication table) was so notorious that Dickens caricatured him as Skimpole in *Bleak House*. Virtually all of his many books are now neglected, but Hunt deserves to be remembered as the man who did much to encourage Keats and other humble writers, and who wrote the poem *About Ben Adhem*.

THOMAS DEQUINCEY (1785–1859)

23. **A Restless Scholar.** Thomas DeQuincey was born in Manchester in 1785. His father was a prosperous merchant who spent much of his time abroad for his health and who died when Thomas was seven. DeQuincey was a precocious child of strange personality. He attended school at Bath, where he surprised his teachers by his progress. At the age of eleven he wrote remarkable Latin verse, and at fifteen he was so proficient in Greek that a professor said of him: "That boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." Later he was sent to the Manchester Grammar School, but at seventeen he wandered off on a tramping trip through Wales. He afterwards drifted to London, where he led an aimless life and had almost starved to death when he was discovered by his family. He then entered Worcester College, Oxford, but

the four years spent there were not very profitable. DeQuincey despised his teachers and left the University without a degree. In 1808 he settled in the Lake District and occupied Dove Cottage at Grasmere after Wordsworth left it for a larger home. He became well acquainted with the Lake Poets and wrote much concerning them in his *Reminiscences*, which are at times more entertaining than accurate. Illness brought on by the hardships and exposure of his life in Wales and in London led him to indulgence in opium, which soon became a habit. The drug probably stimulated his imaginative faculties to an unusual degree, but it also impaired his powers of application and of concentration. As a result he did not write a single book during the long years of his literary life. His "works" are entirely made up of shorter pieces—essays, sketches, and the like.



Thomas DeQuincey

24. An Imaginative Essayist. The loss of his fortune compelled DeQuincey to rely upon literature for a livelihood. From 1821, when he contributed his famous *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* to *The London Magazine*, to the time of his death in 1859 he wrote a total of one hundred and fifty articles upon the greatest variety of subjects for the leading periodicals of the day. Among the best is *Murder as One of the Fine Arts* (1827), a startling piece of irony that reveals DeQuincey's skill in choosing titles for his essays. There is much grotesque and ghastly humor in his learned historical summary of murder from the days of Cain. In 1828 he left the Lake District for Edinburgh, where he lived for the rest of his life. His *Revolt of the*

Tartars (1837), also known as *The Flight of a Tartar Tribe*, is an impressive picture of a great Oriental migration on the plateau of Asia. *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) revealed DeQuincey at his best as an artist in prose. It is really a supplement to the *Confessions*. *Joan of Arc* (1847) is a poetic interpretation of the life and significance of the French heroine. *The English Mail Coach* (1849) is still an entertaining account of certain phases of old English life, although the advent of the automobile in our day has taken the edge off DeQuincey's thrilling account of the posthorses galloping madly along at a speed of thirteen miles an hour. It concludes in a *Dream Fugue: The Vision of Sudden Death*, which is one of the most remarkable prose pieces in the language. Few poets have achieved more felicitous effects in verbal music than are found in the drug-inspired phantasms that surged through the brain of the opium-eater. His *Autobiographic Sketches* (1853) are as interesting for what they tell us of his friends as of himself.

DeQuincey ranks as the first of our imaginative essayists writing in the ornate, rhetorical style. His unusual knowledge of the classics gave him a large vocabulary and an inclination to use learned, sonorous words to excess. Much of his grim humor is buried beneath an avalanche of words. His fondness for digression is another fault and is particularly irritating to the logical-minded reader. At his best, however, he shows an unusual command of rich and fluent English, and a brilliancy of phrasing that entitles him to high rank among the masters of modern English prose.

25. The Reviewers. An interesting phase in the development of literature is the growth of the English periodical, notably the great critical reviews. A number of less important publications of this sort were started in the eighteenth century. *The Monthly Review*, a Whig organ, began in 1749 and continued until 1845. During its earlier years it published much of the hack-writing of Johnson, Goldsmith, and

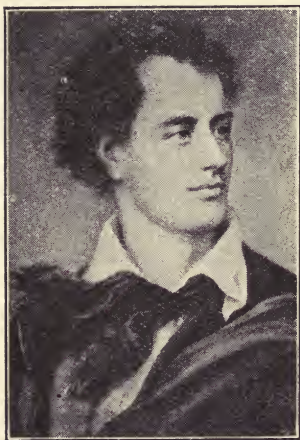
other notables. *The Critical Review* (1756–1817), which had a shorter and less auspicious career, espoused the Tory cause and was edited for a time by Smollett. Among the minor papers were *The London Review*, *The New Review*, *The English Review*, and *The British Critic*.

The first important advance in the periodical field was the establishment of *The Edinburgh Review* in 1802 by three young Scotchmen, Francis Jeffrey, Sidney Smith, and Lord Brougham. Their policy was to publish a large quarterly issue and by adequate payment for articles to secure the coöperation of the best writers. During its early career the most widely discussed articles were those assailing the poets of the Lake School, and Wordsworth in particular. The political affiliations of the *Edinburgh* were Whig, and the review proved very valuable in furthering the interests of that party. Macaulay, Carlyle, and John Stuart Mill contributed some of their best essays to its pages. In 1809 the Tories established *The Quarterly Review* in London, and conducted it along lines similar to the *Edinburgh* except in politics. The *Quarterly* likewise achieved a reputation for its leading articles, but its attacks on Keats and Tennyson were more notorious than famous. Among its best contributors were Scott, Southey, and Lockhart. Both the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* still flourish side by side with many other reviews and literary magazines established later.

LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

26. A Noble Bard. George Gordon Byron was born in London in 1788, the son of a reckless soldier known to his associates as “Mad Jack” Byron, who fled to France to escape his creditors and died there in 1791. The boy was lame from birth, and in later years became very sensitive because of this deformity. During his youth he lived at Aberdeen with his indulgent mother who alternately petted

and reviled him. He was educated in private schools and in the Aberdeen Grammar School, but he had little religious or moral training. At the age of ten he succeeded to the title of Lord Byron on the death of his grand-uncle and was taken to live at the family seat, Newstead Abbey. He entered Harrow at thirteen and spent four years there, during which period he became more distinguished as a boxer and cricket batsman than as a student. He fell in love at fifteen, proposed to a charmer much older than



Lord Byron

himself, and was somewhat distressed over his rejection. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1805, where he devoted most of his time to boxing, swimming, and expressing contempt for his teachers. His first literary venture was a small volume of *Fugitive Pieces* published privately in 1806 and later brought out publicly with additions as *Hours of Idleness* (1807). These poems were sharply criticized in *The Edinburgh Review*, whereupon Byron retaliated with the most trench-

ant poetical satire of the century, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), in which, with Pope's *Dunciad* as a model, he lampooned not only his critics, but Scott, Wordsworth, and contemporary writers in general. Shortly after attaining his majority in 1809 he took his seat in the House of Lords and then proceeded on an extensive tour including Spain, Turkey, and Greece. During this trip he performed the notable feat of swimming the Hellespont.

27. Sudden Fame. On his return to England after an absence of two years he published the first and second cantos

of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). This poem achieved a fame so immediate that Byron declared he awoke one morning and found himself famous. He adopted the Spenserian meter for this popular poem, but did not always use that measure skilfully. The public, however, was willing to forget the shortcomings of the meter in the glowing pages descriptive of the Spanish bull-fight, the Mediterranean, the scenery of Albania, and the past splendors of Greece. With prophetic anticipation of the part he was destined to play in the affairs of Greece he called for a leader to free Hellas from her bondage:

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scattered children forth,
And long accustomed bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did wait,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylae's sepulchral strait —
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

For three years thereafter Byron was the most conspicuous figure in literary London. His open collar and flowing tie were copied by all the dandies of the day; every one craved the acquaintance of the handsome poet and worshiped at his shrine. With almost incredible speed he dashed off a series of Oriental tales in verse, written in the style that had been popularized by Scott. Among the best of these were *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), *The Siege of Corinth* (1816), and *Parisina* (1816). These poems were bought in enormous editions by his many admirers and discussed everywhere, but to-day they are generally neglected as carelessly written narratives in which the hero is almost invariably an exaggerated conception of the poet himself. The widespread adulation developed the worst traits of Byron's character and led him to assume a pose of proud disdain toward those about him.

In 1815 he married Anne Isabelle Milbanke, but they separated a year later and Byron left England, never to return. During 1816, while spending the summer with Shelley at Lake Geneva, he wrote his fine poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*, which is one of the most popular of his shorter pieces. In fluent verse he told the story of one who, like the historic Bonnivard, was imprisoned for many years in the dungeons of this famous castle built on a small island in Lake Geneva:



The Dungeon of Chillon

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left:
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day.

He wandered about Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, gathering impressions for the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which were published in 1816 and 1818. In these concluding cantos, which are considered the best part of the poem, are the notable descriptions of Waterloo, the Rhine, Lake Geneva, and the imperishable memorials of Venice, Florence, and Rome. One of the most famous passages in the poem is the account of the Duchess of Richmond's ball in Brussels on the night before Waterloo and the interruption of the merry-making:

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? — No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet —
But hark! — that heavy sound breaks in once more
As if the clouds its echoes would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is — it is — the cannon's opening roar!

28. The Last Phase. During his later years Byron wrote a number of poetic dramas, of which *Manfred* (1817), inspired by Goethe's *Faust*, shares with *Cain* (1821), the honor of being most important. He labored for several years at a long poem, *Don Juan* (1819–1824), which is in many respects his best work. In the adventures of his romantic hero, Byron, as usual, reproduced some of his own experiences.

It is a satiric flaunt at British conventions and makes clear how keenly he felt the ostracism that was inflicted upon him at the time of his misunderstanding with Lady Byron.



Scene in Venice

The poem was left incomplete because of a patriotic venture that brought Byron's career to an early and tragic close. In 1823 he espoused the cause of the Greeks in their struggle for independence against the Turks. He sailed for Greece during the same summer and took active part in the uprising.

Within a month he was taken ill in the marshes of Missolonghi and died in 1824. His body was brought to England and buried at Hucknall Torkard, not far from Newstead Abbey.

29. Significance of Byron. A survey of a collected edition of Byron's poetry will show that he wrote too much to write well at all times. He was in such haste to get on with his work that he did not bother to improve faulty rhymes or rhythms. There



Newstead Abbey

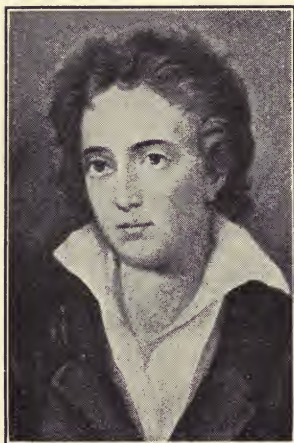
is attractive variety in his work, but, as in the case of Wordsworth, it should be studied in judicious selections. Byron takes rank as the most picturesque and romantic of literary rebels. He was dissatisfied with the estab-

lished order of society and lived his life to suit himself regardless of public opinion. In fairness to Byron, however, we must not forget his tainted ancestry and his lack of proper training in childhood. The heroes of his poems and dramas are usually gloomy, moody variations of himself at odds with the world, defying not only the social conventions and the laws of men, but even Heaven itself. Although Byron's works created a profound impression on European literature and are still regarded on the Continent as second only to Shakespeare's, English critics from the first regarded his heroics as a deliberate pose. His narrative verse often attained picturesque effects with the greatest ease, and his vivid descriptions of continental scenery did much to stimulate travel. He also composed some beautiful lyrics that are still familiar in varied musical settings, but in most of his work there is a manifest lack of sincerity that detracts from his fame. Only in a few of his shorter pieces, such as *The Dream* and *Darkness*, do we feel that his emotion is genuine. To make the most of a contemporary fame for rapid and brilliant composition, Byron sacrificed much of the reputation that he might have won by a more careful exercise of his unquestioned talents.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

30. A Young Visionary. Shelley was born at Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex, in 1792. He came of a wealthy, noble family and was a grandson of Sir Timothy Shelley. While a school-boy at Eton College he began to write poetry. He was incensed at the tyrannies practiced by the older boys; they retaliated by calling him "mad Shelley." In his eighteenth year he published a slender volume called *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, and matriculated at University College, Oxford. He had been at Oxford less than a year when he was expelled for publishing an anonymous pamphlet

entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. He went to London, where, a few months after his nineteenth birthday, he married Harriet Westbrook, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a retired coffee-house keeper. For this rash proceeding he was disinherited by his father and thereafter was at odds



Percy Bysshe Shelley

with his family. The marriage proved unhappy, and Shelley later separated from his wife. His first long poem, *Queen Mab*, appeared (1813) in a private edition. It was a crude attack on religion, society, and government. Far more meritorious and artistic was his next extensive poem, entitled *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816). *Alastor* typifies the lofty-minded poet's search for his ideal — the lovely dream-maiden who seems ever beyond his reach. The poem abounds in typical nature

descriptions of the finest sort of which we get a specimen in the opening invocation:

Earth, Ocean, Air, beloved brotherhood!
 If our great Mother has imbued my soul
 With aught of natural piety to feel
 Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
 If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
 With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
 And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
 If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
 And Winter robing with pure snow and crowns
 Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs —
 If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
 Her first sweet kisses — have been dear to me;
 If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast,

I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; — then forgive
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favor now!

During that year Shelley's unhappy wife committed suicide, and shortly afterwards he married Mary Godwin, daughter of the philosopher William Godwin. He settled at Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, where Leigh Hunt made him acquainted with Keats. There he wrote *The Revolt of Islam* (1817), in which he took a fling at various social institutions that did not meet with his approval, and taught that love alone should rule the moral world. Much of this long revolutionary poem was written in his boat on the Thames or while wandering about the beautiful country near at hand.

31. Shelley in Italy. He went to Italy in 1818, visited Byron in Venice, and spent a short time in various cities, finally settling in Pisa. During the following year he produced his two most important works, *The Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound*. *The Cenci* is a stirring tragedy, telling the pathetic story of Beatrice Cenci and accepted by most critics as the finest poetic drama written in England since the spacious days of Elizabeth.



University College, Oxford

Prometheus Unbound is a lyrical drama in the classical style, based on the old story of the demigod who was chained to the rocks. In allegorical fashion it depicts humanity strug-

gling in the chains of evil. During this prolific period Shelley also wrote the most admired of his shorter pieces — his *Ode to the West Wind*, *The Cloud*, and *To a Skylark*. In these we have the finest illustration of his musical and ethereal imaginative quality. His longer poem, *Adonais* (1821), is a lovely elegy expressing his indignation over the untimely death of Keats. This noble threnody takes rank with *Lycidas* for beauty of language and loftiness of sentiment. The poem concludes with a thought prophetic of his own doom, which came only a few months later (1822), when he was drowned while sailing on the Bay of Spezzia:

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given.
 The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar!
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the eternal are.

His body was afterwards recovered and cremated on the shore. The ashes were buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome, not far from the grave of Keats.

32. An Ethereal Singer. Shelley's poetry is essentially lyrical and appeals mainly to those who appreciate the musical and the imaginative quality in verse. He wrote no pleasantly rhymed romantic tales, like those of Byron; he made no similar bid for popularity. Like Byron, he defied convention and preached rebellion in his poetry, but his variety of rebellion sought to achieve higher and better things for humanity, not to deify the rebel in a conspicuous position of sullen and uncompromising defiance. The errors of his life must be judged more kindly than Byron's. He had a noble vision of a world made better than the world he knew. Every effort seemed to be directed

toward teaching the human soul how to escape from its base worldly shackles and soar to heights yet unattained. There is a light and airy quality about his verse that is often characterized as spiritual. Matthew Arnold was most happy in his description of Shelley as "a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

33. A Blighted Life. John Keats was born in London in 1795 and was the son of a livery stableman. He attended school at Enfield, where he acquired some knowledge of Latin and French, but no Greek. At fifteen he was left an orphan, taken from school, and apprenticed to a surgeon. He studied medicine in London for two years, but disliked the profession. The reading of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* aroused his enthusiasm for literature and he soon began to compose poetry of his own. Leigh Hunt encouraged him by printing one of his sonnets in *The Examiner* and by urging him to continue his literary efforts. With the help of Shelley he brought out his *Poems* (1817), but the venture was unsuccessful. However, it contained some admirable sonnets, including the one entitled *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, in which he paid tribute to the sturdy Elizabethan's translation as the means of his dis-



John Keats

covering the wide domain where Homer reigned supreme. In 1818 he met Fanny Brawne and became engaged to her. During the next six months he wrote some of his best work, including the first portion of *Hyperion*. This classical poem, which promised to be one of his greatest works, was left a fragment — but a superb fragment — at his death. His poem

Endymion (1818) was greeted by bitterly hostile reviews in *The Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. In spite of its immaturity and its occasional excess of ornament, there is much memorable poetry in this mythical story of the young shepherd who was beloved by the moon-goddess. Although the poet's friends insisted that the brutal reviews of this book had aggravated Keats's illness and had hastened his death, there is no evidence



Painting by Waterhouse

La Belle Dame sans Merci

that Keats was as much distressed by the attacks as were his friends. His beautiful poetical tale *The Eve of St. Agnes* and the ballad *La Belle Dame sans Merci* were both written in 1819. About this time his health broke down and the symptoms of consumption disclosed themselves. Early in the following year his health gave way completely and he realized that the end was near. He brought out his *Lamia and Other Poems* (1820) which, in addition to *Lamia*, a tradition of a beautiful enchantress who is compelled to resume

her true serpent form, also contained *The Eve of St. Agnes*, which is usually accepted as his masterpiece. There is nothing in English romantic poetry that exceeds the sheer beauty of the scene as it unfolds itself — the bitter chill of a winter's night in a medieval castle, where an ancient Beadsman mutters his prayers among the tombs in the icy chapels, while knights and ladies are engaged in joyous revelry in the glowing halls beyond:

His prayer he saith, this patient holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and rises from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

A love-story somewhat suggestive of *Romeo and Juliet* develops, but the ending is happy. Never has such a tale been more delicately or more beautifully told.

Included in this memorable volume were the *Ode to a Grecian Urn* and the *Ode to a Nightingale*, which are among the supreme lyrical poems of the language. In the latter we note the passionate heart-ache and a premonition of the early death that awaited him:

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

He sailed for Italy in September, accompanied by his friend Joseph Severn, the artist. He died in Rome in February, 1821, only a few months after his twenty-fifth birthday. The simple headstone over his grave in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome carries the inscription: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

34. The Apostle of Beauty. In his poetry Keats lived as in a world detached. He cared little or nothing for what was going on about him in politics, literature, or philosophy. The beauty of that realm of his own creating was all-sufficient. In the opening lines of *Endymion* he sang:

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases, it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

His fine sense for sound brought back into our literature the gorgeous phrasing of the Elizabethans. In spite of his ignorance of Greek, he was thoroughly familiar with classic literature in translation and revealed more of the spirit of ancient Athens than many a poet of university training. His fondness for classical mythology is seen in his choice of subjects. Like Shelley, he is a poet's poet. His remoteness from human interests has narrowed the circle of his appeal, but Keats should not be censured for failing to attain a popularity for which he did not strive. None of the other romantic poets more thoroughly lived up to the principle of art for art's sake. Nor must we forget that his great achievement is that of the shortest life in English poetry except Chatterton's.

Byron, Shelley, and Keats are always grouped together, just as we group Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. The older men, who constituted the Lake School, were all born between 1770 and 1774, began life as liberals, became con-

servatives, and lived in England to a normal old age. The other three, who were called the Satanic School by Southey, were all born between 1788 and 1795, were either liberal or radical all their lives, and died young in foreign lands. Of course, they differed greatly among themselves in their ideals. Byron was an egotist in art, Shelley an idealist, and Keats a worshiper of beauty for its own sake.

35. Minor Romantic Poets. The great outburst of poetry during the period of the romantic triumph obscured the work of several capable singers who would rank higher but for the inevitable comparisons with their greater contemporaries. A few of these merit brief mention. Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), a banker and a patron of literature, outlived even Landor by three years. Such writers as Sterne, Gray, and Goldsmith were still alive during his boyhood; and Stevenson was a lad of five when Rogers died. He was a man of great wealth and did much to encourage young writers. He wrote *The Pleasures of Memory* and *Italy*, poems that reflected a rather academic attitude. In 1850 he had the honor of declining the laureateship. Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), a Scotchman, was influenced by Rogers when he wrote his poem, *The Pleasures of Hope*, which secured for him a resting-place in Westminster Abbey.

Thomas Moore (1779-1852) was an Irishman who was immensely popular in his day, but is now somewhat neglected. His ornate Oriental poem *Lalla Rookh* was inspired by the metrical tales of his friend Byron, whose biography he later wrote. Although his ambitious poems are almost forgotten, Moore has an assured place in literature because of his songs beginning "'Tis the last rose of summer," "Believe me if all those endearing young charms," "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps," and "The harp that once through Tara's halls."

Thomas Hood (1799-1845) devoted a life of ill-health and affliction to the writing of humorous poetry. He published



The Poets' Corner

comic annuals and undertook all sorts of depressing hack-work, yet he did more to make the world laugh than any other English poet. He was probably the greatest of all punsters and was responsible for some of our best puns — as well as some of the worst. Poems in punning style are *Faithless Sally Brown* and *Faithless Nelly Gray*. But the man who wrote these gay trifles had also a tragic note in his memorable lyric of social protest, *The Song of the Shirt*, which was a cry from the heart of the poor underpaid seamstress; his other popular poem, *The Bridge of Sighs*, is a masterpiece of human sympathy wrought in an unusual meter. There is a weird fascination in his dramatic poem, *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, that will appeal to those who admire versified “tales of terror.”

CHAPTER XI

THE VICTORIAN AGE

1. **Social and Political Changes.** When England in 1815 concluded her long struggle against Napoleon and saw him safely stowed away on St. Helena, she looked forward to the pleasant pursuits of peace; yet the ensuing seventeen years witnessed a most remarkable revolution in English history. It was not a revolution like that of France, accompanied by bitter warfare and shedding of royal blood, but an equally effective revolution that placed political power more definitely in the hands of the people. Cruel laws that imposed the death penalty for more than two hundred offenses were repealed; the man who stole five shillings was no longer subject to the same sentence as a murderer. The slave-trade was abolished and imprisonment for debt was likewise stopped. After a bitter struggle in Parliament the unjust laws against Catholics and Dissenters were repealed, and in the great Reform Bill of 1832 — one of the landmarks in the history of democracy — the entire government was made over. As the Magna Carta of 1215 represented the triumph of the people collectively over the autocratic king, the Reform Bill of 1832 represented the triumph of the middle and working classes over the nobility. Slavery was promptly abolished in the colonies, and soon after came factory legislation to provide more humane conditions for the workers. In literature, curiously enough, the line of demarcation between the old order and the new was quite as definite. The year 1832 marked the death of Scott and the virtual beginnings of the literary careers of Tennyson and Browning. A few years later (1837) when Victoria

ascended the throne, both Dickens and Thackeray had published their earliest works and the rich literary output of the Victorian era (1837-1901) was under way. No other reign in English history saw more significant and far-reaching changes in the daily routine of a typical Englishman's life.

2. Growth of Democracy. The popular triumph that attended the wresting of power from the House of Lords in 1832 was carried on successfully by the liberal interests and was widely reflected in the literature of the period. New conditions produced difficult problems for the new democracy to solve. The application of steam and machinery to manufacturing wrought havoc in various handicrafts and threw thousands out of employment. Workers organized trade-unions for their protection. The lower classes felt that the business interests were getting the greatest benefit under the new order of things, and they drew up a "People's Charter" to exploit their own cause. Their demands were too sweeping, however, and the Chartist Movement ended in failure. Many of the wrongs suffered by the masses were corrected by later legislation. There was a rapid development of interest in popular education. Improved methods of printing made newspapers cheaper; magazines and other periodicals multiplied and were more widely read. The institution of penny postage did much to improve communication and to break up rural isolation. The town laborer soon had an opportunity to attend night-schools or "workingmen's colleges," and thus become a more intelligent citizen. The writers of the age had to consider the tastes and the inclinations of a constantly growing circle of readers who represented all stages of the social order. Under such conditions the literature of the Victorian era gradually became more democratic and more general in its appeal.

3. Science and Religion. The remarkable progress that followed the introduction of the steam-locomotive can

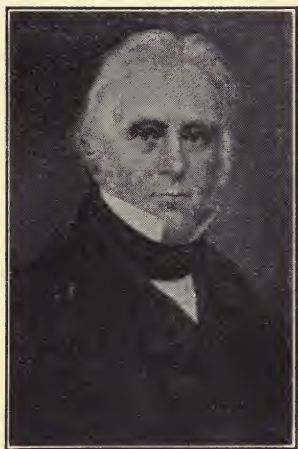
hardly be fully grasped at this late day. The difference between transportation by the leisurely stage-coach of the eighteenth century and the swift railroad train of the nineteenth century presents but one phase of the advance. The electric telegraph seemed almost a miracle when it was first tested, yet the cable, the telephone, and the electric light followed in fairly rapid succession. Developments in the natural sciences, in medicine, and in surgery were such that some conservative spirits feared the consequences of this amazing progress in scientific achievement. There was a tendency towards materialism and away from spiritual ideals — a trend that became most marked after the doctrine of evolution was announced and men began to discuss the “conflict” between religion and science. Many scholars and writers were seized with grave doubts for a time; they suffered much anguish of spirit until the fact became clear to them that science and religion were not antagonistic, but could work in harmony for the welfare of mankind. Under such conditions it is easy to understand why, in spite of the popularity of Tennyson, the general trend of the Victorian Age was toward prose, especially the novel and the essay. Poetry gradually came to be looked upon as convenient material for filling up odd spaces in the magazines not preëmpted by fiction or literary essays. During the later decades of the age there was little encouragement for the poet who ventured to put forth a long epic or narrative poem. Even the publication of short poems collected in book form found a comparatively small audience. Unlike the Romantic period, which was a golden age for poetry, the Victorian period was essentially an age of prose.

Two important essayists belong to the transition from one period to the other. It is somewhat difficult to assign Carlyle and Macaulay to their proper places. Macaulay published his first essay in 1825. Carlyle, although he was the older man and began publishing in 1824, did not become con-

spicuous as a writer until 1837, when Victoria ascended the throne. Both men did their best work during the Victorian era and Carlyle survived until 1881. However, DeQuincey and Hunt both lived until 1859, when Macaulay died, and they might properly be grouped with him, as he reflected less of the modern spirit than we find in Carlyle.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-1859)

4. A Remarkable Youth. Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, in 1800, as the son of Zachary Macaulay, a wealthy philanthropist and zealous opponent of the slave-trade. He was a precocious child, reading at the age of three and writing epics at eight. After attending various private schools, he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, when he was eighteen. His career at the University revealed his remarkable intellectual powers. Twice he won the prize for the best English poem and for seven years he held a fellowship at Trinity. Throughout life he was an omnivorous reader and an incessant worker. Many



Thomas Babington Macaulay

stories are told of his remarkable memory. At nine he had read Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* once and could repeat the entire poem. Later he had the reputation of being able to repeat most of the Bible and all of *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress*. His essay on *Milton* (1825), which appeared in *The Edinburgh Review*, literally made him, like Byron, famous overnight. From that time he was a frequent

contributor to the periodicals and wrote extensively even during the busy years of his political activity. He was admitted to the bar in 1826 and four years later was elected to Parliament. In politics he was consistently a liberal and much interested in the great issues of the day. His brilliant speeches in 1831-1832 during the agitation of the Reform Bill won him recognition as a leading orator. His services were rewarded in 1834 with an appointment as Member of the Supreme Council in India at a salary of £10,000. Macaulay remained in India more than four years and did much to codify and improve the laws of that country.

5. The Historian of England. Upon his return from India he was repeatedly elected to represent Edinburgh in Parliament, but lost his seat in 1847 because he was brave enough to offend some of the least worthy of his constituents. He was a man of the strictest integrity and never compromised with his conscience. After his defeat he withdrew from political life for five years and devoted himself to the great project of writing the history of England from the Revolution of 1688 to the reform era of 1832. The first two volumes of the *History of England* appeared in 1848 and achieved an immediate success. All sorts of honors were thrust upon him. He was made Lord Rector of Glasgow University and Fellow of the Royal Society. Edinburgh very penitently reelected him in 1852 as a representative in Parliament. Further distinctions came to him from universities and learned societies all over the world as he continued his labors on the great *History*. The third and fourth volumes appeared in 1855. Two years later he was created Baron Macaulay and took his seat in the House of Lords. His industrious and very brilliant career was brought suddenly to a close by heart disease in 1859. He was buried near Addison in Westminster Abbey. The fifth and last volume of his *History of England* was published posthumously in 1861. So detailed was Macaulay's treatment of

the period he had chosen that the entire five volumes include only sixteen years, or about one-ninth of the ground he had hoped to cover.

6. **Significance of Macaulay.** Although Macaulay was primarily a prose writer, he also published a volume of poems called *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842). Some critics are inclined to deny that these spirited tales in verse are poems at all, because of their commonplace ideas and cheap rhetoric, but school-boys still like to proclaim how Horatius and his valiant companions kept the bridge in the brave days of old. The collected essays of Lord Macaulay may be most conveniently classified as literary and historical. Among the literary essays the best are those on *Addison*, *Bacon*, *Bunyan*, *Dryden*, *Goldsmith*, and *Johnson*; the best historical essays are on *Clive*, the *Earl of Chatham*, *Frederick the Great*, *Warren Hastings*, and the younger *William Pitt*. All of these are visualized with a wealth of detail and anecdote that make the portrait complete. In his essays, as in his history, he portrayed characters so vividly that his writing is as entertaining as a romance. Macaulay must be read with some caution, however, because he was so intensely devoted to his Whig principles that he could not always be fair to his opponents.

Lord Macaulay's prose style is commendable for its clearness. He took pains to acquire a fluent manner, free from monotony and from the curse of involved sentences. His prime purpose was to make the reader understand. He knew that the average man prefers a short sentence to a long one and that such a man can learn more quickly from a concrete illustration than from an abstract statement. Macaulay was not a visionary nor an idealist. He was a practical, clear-headed thinker who made the most of the facts assembled by his capacious memory. His message still appeals to great numbers of readers because it is entertainingly expressed and easily remembered. Lord Macaulay

is not to be ranked among the great spiritual leaders of his age, but he did much to win innumerable readers, young and old, to an appreciation of good literature.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

7. A Busy Life. Thomas Carlyle was born 1795 in a humble cottage at Ecclefechan, in Scotland, and was the son of a sturdy stone-mason. At the age of five he went



Thomas Carlyle

to the village school and later to the grammar school at Annan. At fourteen he entered the University of Edinburgh and upon completing his course there, taught school for several years. His parents wished him to train for the ministry, but he felt no inclination for that calling, although he had taken courses in both divinity and law at Edinburgh. He began the study of German literature and in 1822 wrote a *Life of Schiller* for *The London Magazine*. Two years later he translated Goethe's

Wilhelm Meister and did other notable services in acquainting English readers with the more important literature of Germany. About this period he visited London for the first time and met Coleridge at Highgate. In 1826, after a courtship lasting several years, he married Jane Welsh, a talented woman of distinguished lineage who lightened his cares during the bitter struggle for recognition. Carlyle suffered

from chronic dyspepsia and was not always a cheerful companion. Whenever his complaint was "gnawing like a rat in his stomach," he must have been a sore trial to his devoted wife. They lived for six years on her farm at Craigenputtock. During this period he wrote *Sartor Resartus*, his remarkable book on the philosophy of clothes, which he contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* in 1833-1834. This significant work was slighted at first in England, but attracted considerable attention in America. Ralph Waldo Emerson visited Carlyle at Craigenputtock and formed a friendship that not only continued for half a century, but also found expression in an interesting exchange of letters. The publication of this important correspondence emphasized the close intellectual kinship between England and America.

8. Carlyle in London. In 1834 Carlyle removed to London,

where he continued to live for nearly half a century in Cheyne Row, Chelsea. In the attic-study of this house Carlyle had a double wall built to keep out the noises from the street, as well as the irritating crowing of his neighbors' cocks — but the device was not successful. During the first part of that period Jane Welsh Carlyle was a gracious hostess in the Cheyne Row home, which is to-day one of the notable literary shrines of London. The many friends of the Carlyles soon recognized the fact that she would have become distinguished on her own account if she had not elected to become the wife of Carlyle. Shortly after their removal to London it was Carlyle's great misfortune to suffer a serious loss through the negligence of one of those



Ecclefechan

friends. While he was at work on his history of the French Revolution, he permitted John Stuart Mill to look over the manuscript of the first volume. A servant carelessly destroyed the manuscript, to the great despair of Mill. Carlyle, however, resolutely set to work again and rewrote the history from the beginning. When *The French Revolution* (1837) finally made its appearance, it established the author's reputation for all time. It is not trustworthy history, however, because Carlyle stressed unduly the picturesque leaders and the incidents that appealed to his fancy, and gave his readers a succession of graphic scenes in the Reign of Terror. A collection of *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* that appeared in 1839 included his famous *Essay on Burns*, the most admirable of his shorter pieces, and still regarded as the best estimate of his gifted fellow-countryman. *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841) was a series of lectures delivered in London. In these he adopted the view that all great developments in history result from strong leaders and that the masses of mankind will follow as the dominant personality leads. To establish his contention, Carlyle selected Mahomet, Dante, Luther, Shakespeare, Knox, Cromwell, and Napoleon, and showed how they had influenced their own times and posterity by their varying kinds of leadership.

Cromwell's Letters and Speeches (1845) was an important undertaking that did much to set the Protector right in English minds. In the essays and pamphlets that followed, Carlyle showed more of a disposition to scold and to denounce his contemporaries. His important undertaking, *The History of Frederick the Second* (1858-1865), represented fourteen years of literary toil. It is really a history of continental Europe for the period it covers, but its length is apt to discourage the modern reader. In 1865 he was elected Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh. It was during his visit to Edinburgh in 1866 to deliver the inaugural address that he received the news of his wife's sudden death in

London. Carlyle was much depressed by his loss — the more so, perhaps, because he learned from her journal that he had often made her unhappy by his irritable temper. He was then past seventy and apparently unwilling to undertake further literary enterprise without her counsel and encouragement. He wrote little except his *Reminiscences* (1881) during the remaining lonely years of his life. He died in 1881 and, in accordance with his own expressed wish, he was not buried in Westminster Abbey, but with his kinsfolk in the graveyard at his birthplace.

9. Carlyle's Message.

Although Carlyle was born before the triumph of Romanticism was complete, he was a thoroughly modern spirit from the first. The theory voiced in *Sartor Resartus* was a strong protest against the false emphasis laid upon the externals of life — judging men by appearances rather than by intrinsic worth. He felt that the world will always be dominated by

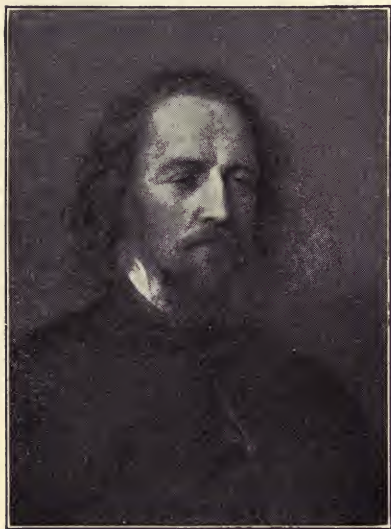


Jane Welsh Carlyle

those who reveal the instinct for leadership, and that this revelation may come just as readily to a peasant as to a king. He proclaimed this doctrine in a strongly characteristic style. Unlike Macaulay, he did not strive to clarify and polish his periods. He took the great truths as they suggested themselves to him and literally hurled them at his reader in that original form. He sought the spirit of things, and cared little for the niceties of diction. He was eloquent, grotesque, fluent, disjointed in turn. His strong prejudices sometimes led him to indulge in a tirade of scolding that irritated his

readers, but he was always a man of high ideals, preaching the doctrine of work and duty to the world. Although in his later years he was looked upon by many as a prophet, his influence began to wane when his extreme pessimism denounced the progressive democracy of civilization. Indeed he became so bitter that a wit declared Carlyle's dictum to be, *Whatever is, is wrong*. In spite of his loss of confidence in his fellow-men, Carlyle gave abiding worth to his writings by revealing his strong, sincere personality in whatever he wrote. We cannot afford to neglect the

teachings of those who, like Carlyle, point the stern way to the highest fulfilment of life.



Lord Tennyson

ALFRED, LORD TEN-
NYSON (1809-1892)

10. A Popular Poet.

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby in 1809, the fourth son of the Rev. George Tennyson, who was rector of that little Lincolnshire village. There were twelve children in the family, most of them talented and nearly all

destined to live to a ripe old age. Alfred received his early training at the Louth Grammar School and at home under his father's able direction. His brothers Frederick and Charles were both ambitious to become poets and Alfred imitated their example. In 1827 Charles and Alfred jointly published an anonymous volume called *Poems*

by *Two Brothers*, a collection that contained no poems of unusual merit, but several creditable imitations of earlier writers. Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, a year later and became one of a group of young men known as the Apostles. The most promising youth of this circle was Arthur Henry Hallam, son of Henry Hallam, the historian. Tennyson and Hallam became the best of friends, and before long Hallam was engaged to marry Tennyson's sister Emily. Meanwhile Tennyson won the Chancellor's medal for his poem *Timbuctoo* in 1829 and soon after brought out his *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) under his own name. There was a notable improvement in the contents of this volume, but it attracted little attention from the critics. The death of his father necessitated his leaving Cambridge without a degree. His *Poems* (1833) evoked a very unfavorable notice by Lockhart in *The Quarterly Review*. Tennyson was so much hurt by the criticism that he published no further collections of poetry for nine years; yet in the volume so roughly treated were some of the best of his shorter poems, including *The Lady of Shalott*, *Oenone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Two Voices*, *The Lotus Eaters*, and *A Dream of Fair Women*. Among the less meritorious but more popular poems in the collection were *The Miller's Daughter* and *The May Queen*.



Tennyson's Birthplace

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11. A Great Sorrow. About this time his dear friend Hallam, who had gone to the Continent to improve his health, died suddenly. The bereavement was a terrible shock to Tennyson, who could not for a time reconcile himself to the passing of so brilliant and promising a young

life. He soon began the composition of a long poem in memory of his departed friend, and for the next seventeen years he wrought lovingly at his tribute. Tennyson had become engaged to Emily Sellwood, but on account of his financial circumstances, which were made even worse by an unfortunate investment in a speculative scheme, their marriage had to be postponed. When he next brought out



Painting by Waterhouse

The Lady of Shalott

a volume of *Poems* (1842) it was received with instant acclaim. From that time there was no longer any question of his leadership among the younger generation. Wordsworth hailed the poet, and the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, granted him a pension of £200. For half a century thereafter Tennyson dominated English poetry with authority and dignity. In the volume that established his fame are some of the finest of modern poems, such as *Ulysses*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Locksley Hall*, *The Vision of Sin*, *The Day Dream*,

and the lovely song beginning, "Break, break, break." *The Princess* (1847) is an entertaining mock-heroic poem dealing with the question of women's rights, which was then engaging public attention. When we read this fantastic

poem we should remember that Tennyson called it a medley. In later editions he added some lyrics of rare beauty, such as "Tears, idle tears," "Sweet and low," and "The splendor falls on castle walls."

The year 1850 marked three significant events in Tennyson's life. He published his *In Memoriam*, the poem on which he had been engaged since the death of Hallam; he became Poet Laureate after the death of Wordsworth; and he married Emily Sellwood. *In Memoriam* is the noblest of English elegiac poems. It is a longer and more ambitious venture than *Lycidas* or *Adonais*. Those earlier elegies were emotional and lyric in quality; *In Memoriam* is meditative and deliberate. The others were intensely personal, but *In Memoriam* voices the general grief of all who have lost dear ones and who have to make their way as best they can to final consolation and renewed faith. The poem traces Tennyson's gradual emergence from a state of bitter anguish and spiritual rebellion over the death of his friend to a complete resignation to Divine decree and an abiding faith in the promise of immortality. When Tennyson first heard the Christmas bells ringing after the death of Hallam, he exclaimed in despair:

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again.

After he had gone through the purifying fires of his grief he sang with calm confidence:

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before.

12. The Poet Laureate. In his official capacity as Poet Laureate, Tennyson produced several notable poems, the

most important being his *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852), which was rather harshly criticized at first, but was later much admired in its revised form. *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1854) is probably the best known of Tennyson's laureate poems and is a fine tribute to soldierly courage. In 1853 he took up residence in a new home at Farringford, on the Isle of Wight. His next poem,



Drawing by Doré

Elaine on the Barge

Maud (1855), was not received with favor, although Tennyson always cherished it as one of his favorite writings. It is a melodramatic love-story in which Tennyson takes occasion to rail against the base commercial spirit of the period. The poem shows unusual skill in varied metrical forms and is rich in verbal music. Whenever Tennyson was asked to read a selection from his works he usually chose a passage from *Maud*. The climax of his poetical

career came with the publication of *Idylls of the King* (1859), a group of romantic poems dealing with tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and based on the narrative of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and other sources of medieval legend. The sale of 10,000 copies during the first week after publication showed Tennyson's great popularity at that time. In the original form only four idylls were included — those dealing with *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and

Guinevere. Of these *Elaine* was immediately chosen as the favorite. Rarely was Tennyson's pathos more effective than in his delineation of the tender maiden's love for the great knight, Lancelot of the Lake:

Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in Hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Among the later volumes that Tennyson produced to complete the cycle of twelve idylls were *The Holy Grail* (1869), *The Last Tournament* (1871), *Gareth and Lynette* (1872), and *Balin and Balan* (1885).

13. Tennyson's Later Works. In *Enoch Arden* (1864) the poet turned from courtly scenes and tournaments to a humble English fishing village and told a simple story involving three lowly lives. The critics complained of its sentimentality and its lack of characterization, but the sale of 60,000 copies expressed the popular verdict in favor of Tennyson. In 1868 he built his home at Aldworth, in Surrey, and thereafter alternated between Aldworth and Farringford according to the season of the year. Later in life he ventured into the field of dramatic composition. In addition to a number of shorter plays he wrote three poetic tragedies in the Elizabethan manner. Two of these — *Queen Mary* (1875) and *Harold* (1876) — did not achieve success, but *Becket* (1884) was produced by Sir Henry Irving in England and in America. Among the best of Tennyson's shorter plays are *The Falcon* and *The Cup*. In 1884 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Tennyson. He continued to write much during his declining years, but his later poetry at times showed the increasing pessimism of old age. His *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* reveals the characteristic view of many an aged philosopher who realizes

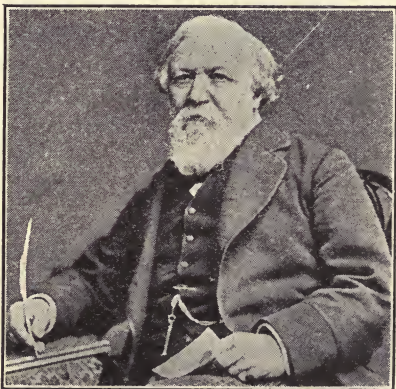
that the world has not fulfilled the expectation of his youth. He published collected volumes of verse in 1886, 1889, and 1892. In his eighty-first year he wrote a beautiful little poem, *Crossing the Bar*, which he directed to be put at the end of all editions of his poems. He died in 1892 and was buried in Westminster Abbey beside Browning. His *Memoir*, written by his son, Hallam, Lord Tennyson, is the most important work of its kind since Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.

14. Tennyson's Poetry. Few poets were more shy than Tennyson or more inclined to live apart from the haunts of men, yet at the same time so much interested in the progress of the great world which they avoided. From his college days he read widely in philosophy and science. He was especially interested in the doctrine of evolution, which created a sensation when it was first proclaimed. Tennyson may fairly be called the poetical interpreter of the greatest age since that of Elizabeth. In comparing him with other poets, we must not forget the remarkable range of his work. His subjects include themes drawn from classical, medieval, and modern sources, and not infrequently from the humble life about him. There was hardly an established form of poetry that he did not essay. His earlier work was mainly lyrical; in his middle period he showed a preference for narrative writing; in his later years he turned to dramatic composition. At all times he displayed great metrical facility. The workmanship of his poetry is the best since Pope's. He constantly revised his poems and the changes that he made are most interesting to study. No other poet was so careful of the succession of sounds in his lines. In fact, some of his earlier lyrics are mere experiments in sound. Although it is true that Tennyson employed many meters in his verse, he never took much interest in the sonnet form. He was at his best in short lyrical measures and in blank verse. Few surpassed him at the art of coining apt phrases or in the deft handling of poetic imagery.

Tennyson spent much of his life in the world of out-of-doors, yet he was not essentially a nature poet. He knew nature well, especially the birds and the flowers, but he did not interpret nature with the vision of Wordsworth. His knowledge was that of the student or careful observer, not that of the prophetic seer. He was at his best in such narrative poetry as the *Idylls of the King* or *Enoch Arden*, both of which reveal a wealth of picturesque phrasing and a leisurely unfolding of the story. At times he gave way to sentimentality, and even in his maturer work he continued the excessive ornamentation that marked some of his earlier efforts. In spite of such faults, however, he ranks among the supreme artists in English poetry and among the greatest of those to whom the literary art was as a consecration.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

15. An Intellectual Poet. Robert Browning was born in 1812 in Camberwell, London. His father was connected with the Bank of England and was known as a devotee of letters and art. At the age of eight young Browning delighted in Pope's *Homer*, but soon transferred his affections to Byron and the other romantic poets. He attended school for a time at Peckham and was later placed in the hands of a private tutor. He did not



Robert Browning

pursue his studies at the university, although he attended a few lectures at University College, London. His earliest

efforts at writing poetry were imitations of Byron, but his first published poem, *Pauline* (1833), is mainly notable because of its exalted tribute to Shelley, under whose spell he happened to be writing. This poem was brought out anonymously at the expense of Browning's aunt, and according to one report, not a single copy was sold. His first visit to Italy in 1834 was part of an extended tour that included Russia and gave him interesting glimpses of continental life. In the following year he published another poem, *Paracelsus*, a work of unequal merit, but characterized by much profound thought. It is a variation of the Faust-legend — the passionate yearning for knowledge. His poetic tragedy of *Strafford* was produced by the actor Macready at Covent Garden in 1837, but with no striking success. *Sordello* (1840) has the reputation of being the most obscure of Browning's works. Many amusing stories are told about it. Carlyle declared that his wife after reading it did not know whether *Sordello* was a man, a city, or a book. Tennyson said he understood only the first line and the last line — and both of them were lies. Douglas Jerrold read the poem while lying sick in bed and burst into tears, believing that he had lost his mind. From the time of *Sordello* Browning's name was associated with obscurity of expression. Many readers to their own great loss have neglected his poems because they felt they would not understand the poet's meaning.

16. A Literary Dramatist. For several years thereafter Browning devoted his best efforts to the composition of literary dramas, of which the best are *Pippa Passes* (1841), *The Return of the Druses* (1843), *A Blot in the Scutcheon* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), and *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846). These are included in a group of eight plays published (1841–1846) under the general title *Bells and Pomegranates*. *Pippa Passes* portrays a day in the life of a young girl, a worker in an Italian silk-mill. It is her one holiday in the year and she wants to make the most of it. Uncon-

sciously Pippa plays a significant part in the lives of the men and women who are so dramatically portrayed while she passes and sings her simple song. Browning's plays are not well adapted for presentation because the characters are too fond of talking at length and because they are minutely analyzed at the expense of action. *A Blot in the Scutcheon* is the only one that had a distinct success on the stage.

In 1845 Browning published his *Dramatic Romances*, which include several of his most popular poems, such as *Incident of the French Camp*, *My Last Duchess*, *The Glove*, *The Boy and the Angel*, *In a Gondola*, and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. During the same year he became acquainted with Elizabeth Barrett after an exchange of letters in which he praised her poetry. Miss Barrett, who was born in 1806, had been an invalid for many years and had to build a world for herself in her sick-room. At the time she met Browning her reputation as a poet was greater than his. Her pathetic poem, *The Cry of the*



Mrs. Browning

Children, a passionate protest against child-labor in the factories and mines of England, had directed general attention to one of the cankers of the social system. Another poem, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, was also widely read. A romance developed between the two poets in spite of the opposition of her obstinate, hot-tempered father. Realizing that it was impossible to obtain his consent, Browning and Miss Barrett were quietly married in 1846 and went to Italy for their honeymoon. Mr. Barrett remained unforgiving to the last and never saw his daughter again.

17. **The Brownings in Italy.** Mrs. Browning's health improved greatly on the Continent and, although she enjoyed traveling as much as her husband, Florence was their favorite home. There she wrote her best-known poems, *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Aurora Leigh*. She was also the author of a beautiful sequence of love-sonnets which she modestly but incorrectly described as *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. During these happy years Browning wrote his *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* (1850) and the collection of short poems known as *Men and Women* (1855), which included such admirable pieces as *Fra Lippo Lippi* and *Andrea del Sarto*. A few years later Mrs. Browning's health failed and she died in Florence in 1861. Thereafter Browning returned to London and settled in Warwick Crescent, though he made frequent trips to beloved spots in France, Switzerland, and Italy. Unlike Tennyson, he was fond of society and liked to make new acquaintances.

18. **The Later Works.** In 1864 Browning published *Dramatis Personae*, which contained such notable poems as *Abt Vogler*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and *Prospice*. *Abt Vogler* is an exalted rhapsody on the intangible art of music. *Rabbi Ben Ezra* joyously expresses confidence in the ultimate purpose of life. It is an optimist's call to face the future with head erect:

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith "A whole I planned,
" Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid."

Four years later Oxford conferred upon him an honorary degree and Balliol College elected him an Honorary Fellow. He had several opportunities to accept the Lord Rectorship of St. Andrews and of Glasgow University, but declined these

honors. His later years were devoted to active composition of poetry. His most ambitious undertaking, *The Ring and the Book* (1868–1869), is a vast epic poem of 20,000 lines, growing out of his picking up by chance an old yellow Latin volume on a bookstall in Florence. The time-stained book told of a brutal murder committed in Rome in 1698. A certain Guido Franceschini had married a beautiful girl Pompilia, supposing her to be a wealthy heiress; when he learned of her poverty he treated her so shamefully that she fled to her foster-parents. There the wretched husband sought her out and killed her and her foster-parents as well. Browning studied the account of the murderer's trial and from it developed his great poem in which the story of the crime is told nine times by different persons, and each time the narrative takes on a different complexion, typical of the knowledge and attitude of the witness. Not many readers may be tempted to take up a poem twice as long as *Paradise Lost*, but judicious selections from *The Ring and the Book* will repay careful study.

After 1870 hardly a year passed that did not witness the publication of another volume of verse by Browning. Much of his later work, however, is abstruse, rambling, and difficult even for his devoted admirers. Most significant, however, are the two series of *Dramatic Idyls* (1879–1880), in which there are some stirring tales, told in vigorous verse. *Ivan Ivanovitch* tells the harrowing story of a Russian mother who threw her children from her sledge to the pursuing wolves in order to save herself. *Clive* is a psychological study of fear, based on an incident in the life of that great but unfortunate soldier. *Mulékkeh* portrays the Arab's pride in his fine horse and incidentally reveals Browning's love for horses. His last volume, *Asolando* (1889), was published in London on the day of his death in Venice. On the last day of that year he was laid to rest under the floor of Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

19. The Poetry of Browning. When Browning was a boy he once declared that two nightingales singing in his father's garden were the souls of Shelley and Keats who had come there with the express purpose of singing for his benefit. If they were, the misguided souls were wasting their time, for never did poet concern himself less about the musical value of his verse than Browning. The ruggedness of his lines will offend the ear of many a reader accustomed to the sweet harmonies of Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson. Yet there is a virility of expression that compensates in



Browning's Home in Venice

part for mere smoothness, and at times Browning can sing as sweetly as any of them. It was far from his intention to write entertaining verse. He felt that he had a message for mankind and he phrased his ideas in his own characteristic way. No English poet showed greater subtlety of thought. His so-called obscurity is really

a fondness for broken sentences and for fantastic digressions to introduce some curious unexpected detail. There is something of Carlyle's philosophy in Browning's glorification of the individual will battling against opposition and overcoming obstacles, but unlike Carlyle, Browning reveals a fine spirit of optimism. He does not growl and scold like the dour Scot, but illumines his message with radiant hope. His gospel was the power of love to glorify and transfigure human existence.

Browning was at his best in the dramatic monologue, in which he permitted the speaker, quite unconsciously at

times, to reveal whatever virtues and vices were within him. Browning's method bore out the popular dictum that most men will tell you what they are — if you give them a chance. Two excellent examples of this form are *My Last Duchess* and *Andrea del Sarto*. In the former a haughty, egotistic Italian nobleman, about to wed for the second time, is describing his first wife while showing her portrait to his visitor. Although apparently he is calling attention to her shortcomings, he is really disclosing his own cruel and relentless nature. In *Andrea del Sarto* the "faultless painter" of the Renaissance is communing with his frivolous wife, trying to explain his failure to achieve his ambitions. He likewise makes unconscious revelations of his own weakness:

All is as God over-rules.

Besides, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Raphael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too, the power —
And thus we half-men struggle.

Much the same method of character revelation was used by Browning in the long speeches which he accorded to the principal personages in his poetic dramas.

Tennyson and Browning dominated Victorian poetry. Each followed his own bent, regardless of the other, but with appreciation of his rival's work. Browning dedicated a volume to Tennyson, and Tennyson returned the compliment. During their lifetime they had their zealous champions, and to-day, as they rest side by side in Westminster Abbey, there are still partisans who try to determine which was the greater poet.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

20. Poet and Essayist. Matthew Arnold was born in 1822 at Laleham on the Thames, a few miles west of London. His father was the famous Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby, familiar to every reader of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and distinguished as a notable historian of Rome. Matthew was sent to Winchester School and to Rugby for his early training,



Matthew Arnold

and at the age of eighteen he entered Balliol College, Oxford. At the University he made a good record, winning the Newdigate Prize for his poem *Cromwell*. After taking his degree he held a fellowship at Oriel College, Oxford, and later became secretary to Lord Lansdowne. In 1851 he was appointed Lay Inspector of Schools and held that uninspiring position for over thirty years. He made several trips to Holland, France, and Germany to

study the school systems of those countries. For two terms (1857-1867) he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Later in life he became a public lecturer and visited America twice on lecture tours. He died in 1888 and was buried at Laleham.

Unlike Tennyson and Browning, Arnold was a prose writer as well as a poet. His critical essays are among the most important in the language, but they belong mostly to his later literary career. His principal volume of *Poems* (1853) contained the famous story of *Sohrab and Rustum*

translated from a great Persian epic. Arnold took the tragic story of the duel between a father and a son, each unaware of the other's identity, and related it in a classic English form that suggests the influence of Homer. The long sustained similes with which the poem abounds are among the finest in English poetry:

But as a troop of pedlers from Cabool
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries;
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows, —
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

Balder Dead is another fine epic and is based on the Norse sagas. After the death of Balder the gods placed his body upon a funeral ship in accord with Norse tradition and applied the torch to the lofty pyre on the deck:

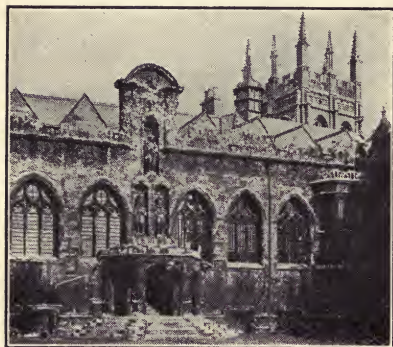
And the ship floated on the waves, and rocked.
But in the hills a strong east-wind arose,
And came down moaning to the sea; first squalls
Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rushed
The breeze, and filled the sails, and blew the fire,
And wreathed in smoke the ship stood out to sea.
Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,
And the pile crackled; and between the logs
Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and leapt,
Curling and darting, higher, until they licked
The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast,
And ate the shrivelling sails; but still the ship
Drove on, ablaze above her hull with fire.
And the gods stood upon the beach, and gazed.
And while they stood, the sun went lurid down
Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and night came on.

His shorter poems include *The Scholar Gypsy*, dealing with Oxford life and intellectual ideals, and *Thyrsis*, a

lament on the death of his friend and fellow-poet Arthur Hugh Clough. *Dover Beach* is an attempt to read the message of the eternal sea and is typical of the spirit of doubt that crept into religion about the middle of the century. *Rugby Chapel* was written under the spell of a bleak winter afternoon while he stood by his father's grave in the chapel of that famous old school.

Among the earlier prose works were his essays, *On Translating Homer* (1861) and *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), which were both delivered as lectures at Oxford. His important *Essays in Criticism* (1865; second series,

1888) included a significant paper, *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, which was the most distinctive critical utterance since the days of Coleridge. There are also in these two volumes several notable studies of great writers. The value of these essays entitles Arnold to rank as the leading literary critic of



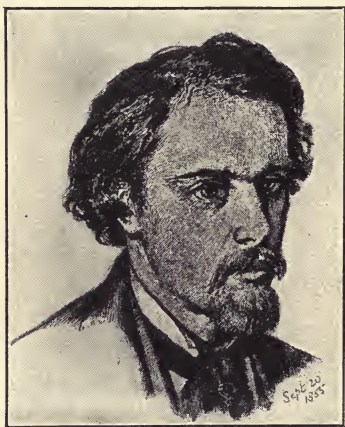
Oriel College, Oxford

the Victorian age. He wrote largely under the inspiration of Sainte-Beuve, the great French critic of that period.

21. Significance of Arnold. In his poetry Arnold stands for classic form and tradition; in his prose, for suave intelligence and critical insight. Although he was outwardly successful in imitating in his verse the manner of his classical models, he often lacked the emotional quality that is essential to great poetry. In the delicate refinement of his polished lines we miss the sturdy vigor of Browning and the fine lyrical strain of Tennyson. It now seems likely that Arnold

will be more highly regarded for his contributions to literary criticism than for his poetry. His essays are characterized by a lucid, clear-cut style, but we note at times a lack of personal sympathy and of genuine interest in the topics discussed. We admire the intellectual quality and the urbanity of Arnold, but we are not usually eager to know him better as a man. The austerity and detachment of his manner both will tend to minimize his future influence in literature.

22. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) was the son of an Italian political refugee who fled to England after the failure of an uprising in Naples. Rossetti was born in London and received an elementary education at King's College School. He then took up the study of art and at twenty-one exhibited his first painting, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin." In 1848 he joined Holman Hunt and Thomas Woolner in organizing the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which upheld the revolt against conventionality in painting that had crept in under the influence of Raphael and later masters. The Brotherhood stood for simplicity and for the naturalness that had characterized Italian art before the period of Raphael. They started a little magazine called *The Germ* (1850) to further their ideas, but only four issues appeared. In 1860 Rossetti married Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, who had been his model for many of the paintings that are now familiar. Two years later his wife died and Rossetti, under the stress of



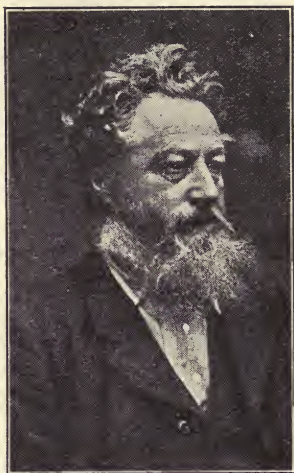
Dante G. Rossetti

grief, buried in her coffin the copy of all his unpublished poems. Eight years later the grave was opened and the poems were taken out and published. The incident gave a sensational notoriety to the volume, which appeared in 1870. The poems were harshly criticized in an article entitled *The Fleshly School of Poetry*, which appeared in *The Contemporary Review*. Rossetti was deeply affected by the criticism and became more retiring than ever in his habits. He made interesting translations from the Italian, published as *Dante and His Circle* (1874), and in 1881 he issued his *Ballads and Sonnets*. Some of his best work is found in such romantic ballads as *The King's Tragedy*, *The White Ship*, and *Sister Helen*. His finest imaginative poem is *The Blessed Damozel*. A beautiful sonnet-sequence called *The House of Life* contains some unusually fine love-sonnets. No other Victorian poet, with the possible exception of Mrs. Browning, showed the same command of the sonnet form as Rossetti. During his later years Rossetti suffered from insomnia and acquired the unfortunate habit of taking chloral. He lived in almost complete seclusion until his death in 1882.

His sister, Christina Rossetti (1830–1894), was also a poet of distinction whose work was much appreciated. Her best poems are *Goblin Market* (1862) and her sonnets. His brother, William Michael Rossetti (1829–1919), was an essayist and critic who edited numerous books including memoirs and anecdotes of his more famous sister and brother, whom he survived by many years.

23. William Morris (1834–1896) was born at Walthamstow, near London, and educated at Marlborough College and at Exeter College, Oxford. While there he was influenced by the work of Rossetti. He took up the study of painting and architecture, but soon devoted himself to the varied arts that are concerned with interior decoration. Not the least of his claims to recognition is the fact that he designed

the popular "Morris chair." He lectured widely on art and literature and became known as a writer on socialistic subjects. His facile pen turned out poetry and prose of every description. His best known poems are *The Defense of Guenevere* (1858), *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), and a series of versified stories called *The Earihly Paradise* (1868–1870). These include some of the most popular legends in mythology. Among his many translations are the *Aeneid* (1875), the *Odyssey* (1887), and various Teutonic sagas, including *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876) and *Beowulf* (1895). In 1891 he established the Kelmscott Press in London and printed some of the most beautiful of modern books.



William Morris



Exeter College, Oxford

designed furniture from English homes. He showed that good taste in home furnishings was not a prerogative of the

Morris earned the gratitude of mankind for his practical labors in bringing beauty into commonplace homes. Instead of writing ineffectual articles glorifying the beautiful in art, he set to work to banish hideous wall-paper and glaring chromos from English walls and badly

wealthy. He wrote charming stories and made many of them into beautiful books. The one regret is that he wasted so much of his valuable time upon untenable theories of social reform. He labored incessantly for the uplift of the masses and for the recognition of nobler ideals of living. As a teller of tales he shows close kinship with Chaucer; as a social reformer he maintained many of the theories expounded by Ruskin. Most of Morris's work is characterized by pure beauty and a desire to achieve the best for mankind.

24. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) was born in Belgravia, a fashionable quarter of London. His father



A. C. Swinburne

was Admiral Swinburne of the British Navy; his mother was the daughter of the Earl of Ashburnham. The family was wealthy and possessed an estate on the Isle of Wight. He was educated at Eton College and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he became one of a distinctly literary group. He left Oxford after three years' residence without taking a degree. For a time he lived in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, in the same house with Rossetti and Meredith, and not far from the home of

Carlyle. He published two poetic dramas, *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamund* (1860), which he dedicated to Rossetti. In the following year he visited Italy and met Landor, who was then in his eighty-sixth year. His next work, *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), is a superb example of Greek drama in English verse. The choruses in this drama include some of the most fluent and most musical passages in modern poetry. *Chastelard* (1866) was the first of a trilogy

of poetic plays dealing with the romantic story of Mary, Queen of Scots. The other plays are *Bothwell* (1874) and *Mary Stuart* (1881). His *Poems and Ballads* (1866) offended some readers who approved of the sharp attacks that were made a few years later on "The Fleshly School." Among his other important volumes of verse were *Songs of Italy* (1867), *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), and *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882). He also wrote critical prose studies of Hugo, Blake, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare, but these estimates were so extravagant in their praise or blame that they are not safe guides. Upon Tennyson's death in 1892 Swinburne was the most distinguished living poet and would undoubtedly have been chosen Poet Laureate had it not been for the pagan spirit of his earlier poems. He died in 1909 and was buried on the Isle of Wight.

Swinburne is notable above all else for the musical quality of his verse and for his metrical facility. He went beyond all other poets in subordinating sense to sound. In fact, his ideas are often lost entirely in a welter of words. None of the other poets approached his fine skill in the more difficult verse forms, especially in long dactylic or anapestic lines. He frequently showed perfect ease in meters that others did not even venture to try. In spite of his lyrical dexterity, however, Swinburne is not a popular poet and never will be. He was more akin to Shelley than to Browning or Tennyson, but he was far behind Shelley in the art of coördinating his ideas with his chosen form. His



Balliol College, Oxford

fondness for excessive alliteration and for unusual rhythms has been frequently mentioned, but Swinburne did not make any notable contribution to the poetry that finds its way into the heart and is not forgotten.

25. Other Victorian Poets. Other notable poets contributed in varying degree to the literary glory of the Victorian age. They represent a wide range of influences and illustrate the increasing diversity of interests in modern literature.

Edward Fitzgerald (1809–1883), a Cambridge graduate, was a friend of Tennyson. He made important translations from the Spanish and the Greek, but is principally known for his English version (1859) of the *Rubaiyat* written by Omar Khayyam, the Persian astronomer-poet. The book was virtually ignored when it first appeared, and the copies were sold for a few pence each on the bookstalls. Rossetti was the first to call attention to the unusual quality of the work. To-day it is one of the treasured first editions so highly prized by collectors, and Fitzgerald's rendering of the *Rubaiyat* is among the most popular volumes of modern poetry. The *Rubaiyat* are quatrains, each one more or less complete in itself, voicing some bit of Oriental philosophy, some cynical commentary on the queer turns of fate, or some reflection of the impulse to make the most of the sensuous joys of life. The spirit of the Caroline Poets is voiced again — with a difference — in

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter — and the Bird is on the Wing.

The most familiar of the quatrains is

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861) was educated at Rugby and at Oxford. He became the close friend of Arnold and was the subject of that poet's elegy *Thyrsis*. His work achieved much of its reputation through his association with Arnold, but it is no longer widely read. His *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848) is a pastoral poem in classical hexameters relating the experiences of a vacation ramble in Wales.

Austin Dobson (1840–) was born in Plymouth and during most of his life was connected with the London Board of Trade. He was especially interested in the literature of the eighteenth century and imitated classical models in his own charming verses, which appeared as *Vignettes in Rhyme* (1873), *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1877), *Old World Idylls* (1883), and *At the Sign of the Lyre* (1885). He also wrote numerous biographical and critical works concerning eighteenth century authors.

Andrew Lang (1844–1912), a Scotchman, was educated at St. Andrews and at Oxford, and became noted for the broad range of his interests and his enormous literary output. Among his poems are *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (1872), *Ballads in Blue China* (1880), and *Helen of Troy* (1880). It would be impossible to enumerate here even the best of his fiction, history, essays, folk-lore, and other publications.

William Ernest Henley (1849–1903) was born in Gloucester and received a grammar school education. While ill in an Edinburgh hospital he met Stevenson and established a friendship of long duration. They wrote several plays together, but these efforts were unsuccessful. For many years Henley was an editor in London and made numerous enemies by his uncompromising attitude. His principal works are his *Book of Verses* (1888), *Views and Reviews* (1890), and *Song of the Sword* (1892). His *Lyra Heroica*, a collection of poems for young readers, has always been popular. He also edited the works of Burns and Byron.

John Davidson (1857–1909) was a Scotchman who became a teacher and later a journalist. He wrote bitterly satirical poems and plays. Among his best known works are *Bruce, a Chronicle Play* (1886), *Smith, a Tragic Farce* (1888), *In a Music Hall* (1891), *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893), and *New Ballads* (1897). He suffered much from poverty, ill-health, and lack of appreciation. In 1909 he ended his unhappy career by committing suicide.

Sir William Watson (1858–) was born in Yorkshire and began to write poetry at an early age. Among his best poems are *Wordsworth's Grave* (1890) and *Lachrymae Musarum* (1892), an elegy on Tennyson, whom he expected to succeed as Poet Laureate. He criticized the English government severely in *The Purple East* (1896) and *The Year of Shame* (1896). His short poem, *The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue* (1909), brought him more notoriety than fame.

Francis Thompson (1859–1907) was born in Lancashire and educated at Owens College, Manchester. Like Davidson, he had a most depressing struggle with poverty. He contributed literary criticism to the weekly papers, but scarcely earned enough to sustain life. His best work is contained in three slender volumes: *Poems* (1893), *Sister Songs* (1895), and *New Poems* (1897). His poems on childhood and his *Hound of Heaven* possess enduring quality. Much of his work is mystical in character and is noted for its exquisite phrasing and memorable passages.

THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

26. A Dominant Literary Form. In no other field of literature did the distinctive tendencies of the Victorian age reveal their influence quite so strongly as in the novel. The romantic fiction that had been popularized by Scott gave way to novels of another sort. There was quick recog-

nition of the fact that a novel could do more than merely entertain the reader by affording pastime for an idle hour. It became a vehicle for social or political reform. The "problem novel" or the "novel of purpose" soon became familiar. For the glamor of the older romance was substituted a cold realism that put the facts strongly before the reader and sought to enlist his sympathy or coöperation in the particular matter at hand. Virtually every subject that concerned the spiritual or material welfare of mankind was presented in the fiction of the period, with the evident intention of molding public opinion. All the forms of story-writing that had been practiced by DeFoe, Richardson, Fielding, Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, and the rest were continued and broadened in scope. Of course, there were also romances in the manner of Scott, and historical fiction was essayed at times by nearly all the leading Victorian novelists, but it was really the quiet, unpretentious example of Jane Austen and not the showy pageantry of Sir Walter that set the chief model for the age.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

27. A Drab Background. Charles Dickens was born at Landport, near Portsmouth, in 1812, as the son of John Dickens, a poorly paid clerk in the Navy Pay Office. Charles was the second of eight children and had a rather squalid boyhood. When he was nine years old the family moved to London in the hope of better conditions, but within a year the unfortunate father was in the Debtors' Prison. Charles found employment in a blacking factory, where he pasted labels on bottles. On Sundays he visited his father in the Marshalsea Prison. As a boy Dickens read in his spare moments all the books he could lay hands on, and particularly enjoyed the novels of Smollett. Later, when the fortunes of the family improved, he became a solicitor's

clerk. After learning shorthand, in which he acquired great proficiency, he became a reporter on *The Morning Chronicle* and received the usual assignments to gather news items for his paper. During those years of varied experiences on the streets of London, Dickens learned many things that the ordinary man never gets to know. He saw



Charles Dickens

much of the degradation and squalor of poverty, but he also observed the lighter side of existence among the lowly.

28. The Rise to Fame. His first book, *Sketches by Boz* (1836), was a series of short pieces collected from his newspaper contributions. He married Catharine Hogarth in the same year, but his married life was not happy, and during their later years Dickens and his wife separated.

About the time of his marriage he was commissioned by a publisher to write little sketches to accompany drawings by the artist Seymour. After a few numbers had been issued, Seymour committed suicide, and the publisher wisely decided that the new artist should make the drawings to accompany Dickens's sketches. Among the unsuccessful applicants for the honor was Thackeray. The completed work appeared as *The Pickwick Papers* (1837), and achieved one of the greatest successes in literary history. It was boldly and widely imitated by a host of jealous, unscrupulous

writers who were not above filching the work or the ideas of a popular rival. *The Pickwick Papers* recounted the droll adventures of Mr. Pickwick and his three intimate friends. It was entertaining from the first, but when Sam Weller was introduced, with his facetious sayings and remarkable similes, Dickens became the most popular writer of the day. His rise to fame was almost startling in its rapidity. The public clamored for more of his work, and Dickens, who had acquired the journalist's facility in composition, rapidly produced a series of novels that enhanced his popularity. *Oliver Twist* (1838) is a novel of human depravity in which Dickens emphasized the tragedy of life quite as effectively as in *The Pickwick Papers* he had stressed its comedy. He gave horrified Londoners certain glimpses of their city that were new to them and made many realize the menace of the slum. *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), although written in a less somber vein, directed attention to the ill-treatment accorded to children in some of the badly managed boarding schools. England at first questioned the fidelity of Dickens's descriptions and even accused him of wilful misrepresentation to gain a larger audience, but on investigation it was found that Mr. Wackford Squeers was by no means a fanciful creation. There is much good fun as well as pathos in the book, for Dickens knew better than to paint a picture of unrelieved gloom. *Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) tells the sad story of Little Nell and her unfortunate grandfather, a victim of a mania for gambling. In this story Dickens introduced the hideous dwarf Quilp, one of the most repulsive of all his characters.

29. Dickens in America. The fame of Dickens spread in America almost as rapidly as in England. Dishonest publishers on this side of the Atlantic pirated his books without hindrance, as the copyright laws of that time did not protect an author against such knavery. Dickens visited America for the first time in 1842, but was not favorably

impressed by what he saw. Upon his return to England he brought out his *American Notes* (1842), in which he sharply criticized American manners and customs. Doubtless much that he said about American society of that remote day was true, but the book gave offense and for a time impaired his popularity almost as much as it did his reputation for good manners. His next book, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844), abounds in good humor and at the same time is an admirable sermon against selfishness and hypocrisy. Once more he satirized Americans as well as Englishmen, and raised another vehement storm of protest. Apart from the exaggerations of the American chapters, *Martin Chuzzlewit* is one of his most entertaining stories. No reader is likely to forget Mrs. Gamp or the sleek Pecksniff, whose very name is a stroke of genius. In 1843 Dickens began a series of *Christmas Stories* which were written annually for the holiday season. The best of these are *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *The Chimes* (1844), and *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845). The first, which was deservedly the most popular, still brings home to its many admirers the need for kindly sympathy and generosity toward those in affliction. The world is not yet rid of its Scrooges, and we can do a public service if we can persuade them to read *A Christmas Carol*.

30. The Masterpieces. The finest of Dickens's novels are those of his middle age. He conquered some of his earlier faults of exaggeration and extravagant, melodramatic effect, and paid more attention to the development of his plot. *Dombey and Son* (1848) was written in Switzerland and is one of the most enjoyable of his books. It is an impressive tale of the humiliation of pride that fails to reckon with fate. *David Copperfield* (1850) was Dickens's own favorite among his works, and the popular verdict has approved his choice. It is the most definitely autobiographical of his novels and is more carefully written than the others.

Nowhere else is his pathos so sincere nor his humor so infectious and well-balanced. With varied emotions we recall such figures as Dora and little Em'ly, Uriah Heep and Steerforth, Barkis and Mr. Dick, and, most memorable of all, Mr. Wilkins Micawber, always waiting for something to "turn up." Dickens's father was the original for that quaint, impractical optimist. Various other persons who figured in Dickens's life have been immortalized in this story, which he wrote out of the fulness of his heart. At no later time did he again rise to such heights in his literary art. *Bleak House* (1853) stressed the unreasonable delays of English chancery courts and the injustice of protracted litigation. Some critics regard it as the most carefully planned of his novels, but contend that his attempts to delineate the aristocratic characters of the story were less successful than his many fine portrayals of persons in low life.

In 1856 Dickens bought a property at Gadshill in Kent and settled there four years later. He began to give public readings from his works and earned large sums by these recitals, but they proved to be a serious drain on his vitality. In his next novel, *Little Dorrit* (1857), he laid bare the iniquities of the Debtors' Prison, which had figured so largely in his own early experiences. This story was the first to arouse harsh criticism for its intrinsic defects; many readers detected in its loosely strung plot the first evidences of the author's intellectual weariness. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) was the most successful of his historical novels, although



Gadshill

the critics do not agree as to its merits. There is little humor and some melodrama, but we cannot lightly forget Sidney Carton's supreme sacrifice, or the grim picture of Madame Defarge knitting in the shadow of the guillotine and calmly counting the heads as they fall. *Great Expectations* (1861) is considerably shorter than most of Dickens's novels and is irregular in quality. It was written after a period of rest and showed occasional flashes of his earlier manner. *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) was his last important novel. His readers shuddered at the ghastly first chapter, but they read on to their great delight as they were introduced to another varied group of amusing social caricatures.

During the winter of 1867-1868 Dickens made a second tour of the United States to give readings from his works. His early tactlessness was forgotten or overlooked. His progress from city to city was in the nature of a notable personal triumph. He returned to England with extremely large profits, but with his vitality seriously impaired by the strain of his numerous public appearances. He was at work on a novel entitled *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* when he died suddenly at Gadshill in 1870. Several attempts have been made by later writers and critics to solve the remarkable problems involved in the complicated plot. Unfortunately the story had not reached the point where the author's intention could be surmised, and the fragment remains good material for those who like to exercise their wits in solving literary mysteries. Dickens was buried in Westminster Abbey and was thus accorded an almost unique distinction among English novelists.

31. Dickens as a Novelist. In the varied experiences that came into Dickens's life he became acquainted with every social group, but he was always at his best in the description of the middle-class and low life of London. His obligation to Smollett is obvious. Both novelists had a fondness for emphasizing a type to the limits of exaggera-

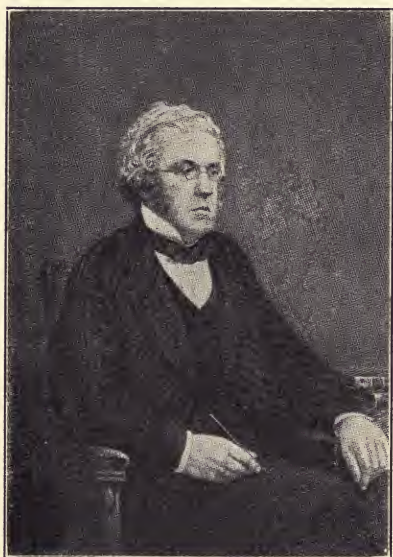
tion, thereby making their persons mere caricatures. Hence we may find much realism in Dickens, yet little sense of reality. His indignation led him to throw such characters as Squeers, Pecksniff, Heep, Fagin, Sykes, and Quilp into bold relief so that they typify some personified vice or human failing. His fondness for detail was so pronounced that there is in all literature no more remarkable portrait gallery than we find in his novels. His humor and pathos run side by side. Readers who roared with laughter over Sam Weller, Dick Swiveller, and Wilkins Micawber were quite as ready to weep over Tiny Tim, Little Nell, or Paul Dombey. Dickens spared no effort in his pathetic scenes and willingly admitted any detail that might win another tear from his reader. However, no author did more than Dickens to win sympathy for children in all walks of life. His tenderness for the young is a trait that he shares with some of the greatest writers in literature.

In his early work there was frequently a humane motive underlying his fiction. He sought to break up the conditions that fostered criminal life among the young, to expose the vicious boarding-school system, the evils of the Debtors' Prison, and the cruel delays of the law. His protest was the universal cry of intelligent mankind against the unnecessary evils of civilization. Judged coldly by the impartial literary critic, Dickens's style is far from commendable. He had acquired a smart journalistic manner and he wrote rapidly with little regard for the niceties of expression. His plots were not well constructed, because most of his novels were issued in parts, and Dickens permitted the story to spin itself and to provide a succession of climaxes as he went along. When the end of the story drew near, he brought all the threads of his narrative together, but not always very effectively. In spite of all this, his popularity continues unabated and is likely to last indefinitely for reasons quite apart from sheer literary merit. The appeal of Dickens is

primarily to the basic instincts of the great mass of humanity — he knew what people liked and wrote accordingly. He portrayed most entertainingly the life that they knew or wanted to know about. He made them laugh and he made them cry; the man who can do either or both will not be without his reward.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–1863)

32. A Genial Satirist. Thackeray was born in 1811 in Calcutta, where his father, Richmond Thackeray, was em-



W. M. Thackeray

employed by the East India Company. The boy was left fatherless at five and a year later was sent to England for his education at Chiswick and at the Charterhouse School in London. He was very unhappy at Charterhouse (which he often called Slaughterhouse) and once wrote to his mother: "There are three hundred and seventy boys in the school. I wish there were only three hundred and sixty-nine." Later he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, but

neglected his studies and devoted much of his time to writing short poems. He remained at the University only two years and then studied law in a half-hearted way. He inherited a substantial fortune with an income of £500 when he be-

came of age, but after an unsuccessful venture as a magazine publisher, he went to Paris to study drawing. While in Paris he married (1836) Isabella Shawe. He had previously lost most of his fortune by gaming or by speculation, and now found it necessary to take up writing as a means of livelihood. On his return to London in 1837 he contributed his amusing *Yellowplush Papers* to *Fraser's Magazine*. These purported to be the memoirs of a footman who expressed himself frankly concerning the usages of fashionable society. The happiness of Thackeray's home was unexpectedly shattered about 1840, when his wife became insane after a severe illness and had to be cared for in seclusion for the rest of her life. His two young daughters were brought up by his mother, while Thackeray made his home henceforth in London clubs. About the time of this sad affliction he brought out *The Paris Sketch Book* (1840), a collection of varied papers that illustrated his ideas on French life, literature, and art. He became a contributor to *Punch* in 1842 and continued on the staff for the next twelve years. A tour of Ireland resulted in *The Irish Sketch Book* (1843), which was originally printed in *Punch*. His first ambitious story, *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1846), a lively autobiography of an Irish rascal, was a logical descendant of the picaresque story of earlier times, but in spite of its obvious merits, it was not popular. His next effort, *The Book of Snobs* (1848), was more successful. Never was a more pungent or more amusing satire leveled at those unfortunate creatures of whatever rank who foolishly assume airs of gentility and of superiority, or who toady to others above them. It is still good fun and affords several glimpses of Thackeray at his best as a satirist.

33. A Belated Fame. Thackeray was thirty-seven when his great novel, *Vanity Fair* (1848), established his reputation. In this satirical masterpiece he departed from the current tradition of presenting idealized heroes and heroines,

and reverted to the manner of Fielding, who preferred living types with all the traits, good and bad alike, of real persons. A choice array of shady characters of both sexes pass in review before the reader of this "novel without a hero." Although such figures as Rawdon Crawley, George Osborne, and Major Dobbin may be lacking in heroic quality, there is no doubt that Becky Sharp is a notable heroine of an undesirable sort. With hypocritical craft she manages to accomplish her selfish ends and helps to wreck the lives of many who come within her evil influence. Thackeray, in his favorite rôle of a showman exhibiting his puppets, used his numerous characters for a satirical exposure of the smug morality prevailing in middle-class English society. There is much bitter cynicism, however, in this brilliant book, which is apt to leave the impression that all mankind is divided into fools and rogues. After the publication of *Vanity Fair* there was no further question of Thackeray's literary position; henceforth he was one of London's famous men. His next novel, *Pendennis* (1850), included much of his own earlier experience and appeared in the same year as *David Copperfield*, its counterpart in the works of Dickens. Thackeray's hero is very human, with a due share of Thackeray's own failings, but the book, in spite of its merit, was not so popular as *Vanity Fair*. In a series of *Lectures on English Humorists* (1851) he presented detailed studies of the personality of such men as Swift, Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith. The lectures display Thackeray's very thorough knowledge of the eighteenth century — a knowledge which he used to good effect in his next novel, *Henry Esmond* (1852), considered by many the best historical novel in the language. The finer side of Thackeray's nature is revealed in this vivid picture of the reign of Queen Anne. Beatrix and Lady Castlewood are admirably drawn and Esmond himself is throughout a true English gentleman. The atmosphere of the period is reproduced with remarkable

success. *Henry Esmond* is everything that a good historical novel should be.

34. The Later Years. In 1852-1853 Thackeray visited America and delivered his course of lectures in the large cities. It is noteworthy that he was not guilty of such literary indiscretions as resulted from Dickens's first visit to America. Upon his return he took a short vacation on the Continent and then wrote his next important novel, *The Newcomes* (1853), a social satire of rambling episodes, but memorable for several splendid characters, notably that of Colonel New-

come, one of the great portraits of English fiction and said to be based upon Thackeray's stepfather. Many critics regard the concluding chapters of this story as Thackeray's supreme achievement.

On his second American tour in 1855 he lectured



Fountain Court, Middle Temple

on *The Four Georges* and did the best he could for that sorry assortment of monarchs. He was a candidate for Parliament in 1857, but was defeated in a very close contest. Thackeray took his defeat gracefully and went on with his literary work. He brought out a sequel to *Henry Esmond* under the title *The Virginians* (1859), in which he related the story of the Esmond family in Virginia at the time of the Revolutionary War. It is the least interesting of his later works, but will be read by all those who wish to know what became of the fickle Beatrix whom they met in the pages of *Henry Esmond*. In 1860 Thackeray became editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*, to which he contributed *Lovel the Widower* (1860); *The Adventures of Philip* (1862), which resembles *Pendennis*

in plan, but is much inferior; and *The Roundabout Papers* (1860-1863), a series of essays and sketches in which we get the finest evidences of Thackeray's mellowed genius. At the time of his sudden death on the day before Christmas, 1863, he left an unfinished novel, *Denis Duval*. He was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, and a bust has since been placed in Westminster Abbey.

35. The Art of Thackeray. There are some writers who reveal evidences of a fascinating personality even in their less significant works and who should therefore not be studied in their masterpieces alone. Much of Thackeray's best humor and satire is to be found in the minor sketches that he wrote for *Punch* and other periodicals. There is very good fun in the rollicking poems that he wrote at odd times during his career. He also gave us one classic story for children, *The Rose and the Ring*, in which youngsters from six to sixty may read with delight of Countess Gruffanuff, the Lord Chancellor Squaretoso, and Captain Kutasoff Hedzoff. Few novelists have been more versatile and more successful in their versatility than Thackeray.

His obligation to Fielding is quite as evident as Dickens's debt to Smollett. He was an uncompromising realist, with none of Dickens's inclination toward romantic coloring or sentimentality. Although he was a year older than Dickens, he did not make a great success until Dickens had completed his sixth important novel. At no time did Thackeray rival Dickens in popularity, but he was the greater writer and showed in his best work the substantial merits that do not require the verdict of popular favor. His style is pure, light, and graceful. He had a mastery of English that places him high among the Victorian prose writers. Throughout his work we note the refined manner and the charm of tone that reflect the gentleman. He was not less notable for character portrayal than for his descriptive power and for keeping his plot well in hand. His satire was not the

bitter invective of a diseased mind like Swift's or of a mean, cynical nature like Pope's. It was the genial, corrective exposure of human frailty and social sham — an exposure that sought to teach mankind to go and do otherwise. Society is full of such callous, hypocritical characters as Thackeray described so effectively; it is well that we should know them for what they are — but do not let us forget that the creator of Becky Sharp and the Marquis of Steyne also gave us Lady Castlewood and Colonel Newcome.

GEORGE ELIOT (1819–1880)

36. A Late Blossoming. Mary Ann Evans, or Marian Evans, as she preferred to be called, was born in 1819 at Arbury in Warwickshire, about twenty miles from Shakespeare's Stratford. Her family was of good country stock and sternly religious. She was sent to school at Nuneaton and at Coventry until she was twelve, then she helped her mother with the household duties. She found opportunity, however, to study languages and to read extensively. At seventeen, after her mother's death, she had to take full charge of the home. She continued her literary studies and in 1846 completed a translation from the German of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. After her father died in 1849 she spent some time in Geneva, and on her return to England became a



George Eliot

contributor to *The Westminster Review* and later an assistant editor. In 1854 she formed a union with George Henry Lewes, who advised her well in her literary undertakings and urged her to try fiction. Her story of *Amos Barton* was published in 1857 in *Blackwood's Magazine* under the pseudonym George Eliot, which she used regularly thereafter. This and two other short stories were brought out in book form as *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858). Many guesses were made at the author's identity, but Dickens seems to have been the first to suspect that the writer was a woman. *Adam Bede* (1859), which is usually accepted as the best of her novels, is an impressive story set in surroundings that were familiar and was based on actual events. Certain traits of her father and her mother were used in the delineation of Adam and Mrs. Poyser. *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) was more autobiographical in character. Maggie and Tom are a reflection of George Eliot and her brother Isaac. The story is tragic and somewhat morbid. *Silas Marner* (1861), a much shorter tale, has always been admired as a model of narrative art. There is real pathos in the story of the unhappy weaver of Raveloe whose sole interest in life is his hoard of gold. George Eliot visited Florence in 1860-1861 and during her tour of Italy conceived the plan of writing *Romola* (1863), her most ambitious undertaking, a portrayal of Florence in the days of Savonarola. It is a tragic love-story with the Italy of the fifteenth century as a colorful background. *Romola* was much admired, but it lacks the imaginative power that is essential to the best historical fiction. The labor of writing the novel was so great that George Eliot said: "I began it a young woman — I finished it an old woman." *Felix Holt* (1866), the least successful of her novels, was political in character. *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), a dramatic poem, was also a failure. *Middlemarch* (1872) was at first hailed as her masterpiece and even lauded as the greatest of all novels, but later judgment has empha-

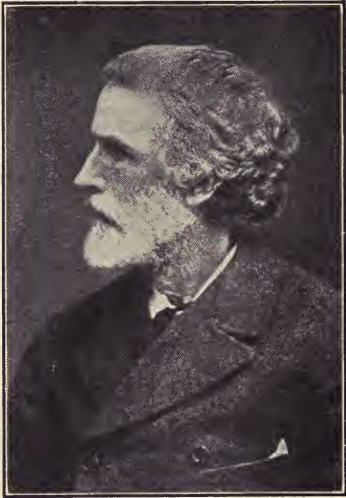
sized the fact that it is labored and overladen with detail. There is too much moralizing and dissection of character. *Daniel Deronda* (1876) revealed her later faults to a far greater degree. She regarded it as her best work, but most readers found it dull. In these later novels she emulated the example of Browning in giving us detailed soul-pictures — studies of motives, impulses, and struggles in the heart of man. George Henry Lewes died in 1878. Two years later George Eliot married John W. Cross and died a few months after her wedding.

37. The Blight of Pessimism. George Eliot was really more successful in her novels dealing with English country life than in her more studied efforts to inject philosophical interpretation of character into her stories. She took special interest in portraying wrecked lives, and in making clear how and why they became failures. There are noteworthy delineations of character in her books. The number of her creations is small, when compared with Dickens or Thackeray, but her characters, like theirs, abide in the memory. During her later years George Eliot was extravagantly praised by her admirers, who insisted that her literary work was on a par with Shakespeare's. Posterity, however, has not sustained that verdict. Much of her contemporary fame was due to the fact that after the death of Thackeray and Dickens she was quite properly regarded as the leading living novelist. Viewed in the light of later contributions to English fiction, her work seems less significant. As a rule her novels are depressing because she preferred to present lives that were failures. Dickens, with all his fondness for exposing social wrong, was fundamentally optimistic, and Thackeray, satirical moralist though he was, endeavored to point out the way to better things. George Eliot, however, seemed to feel that life was a ghastly failure for most persons and that as a sincere artist she must depict conditions as she saw them. In thus permitting a pessimistic strain to

pervade most of her work, George Eliot really invited the comparative neglect from which she now suffers.

38. **George Meredith (1828–1909)** was born at Portsmouth and after getting his early education was sent to school in Germany for two years. Afterwards he entered a solicitor's office, but abandoned law when he became of age. His early life was full of hardship, as his books did not meet with favor, and he was disinclined to turn to some other

means of livelihood. For many years he was a publisher's advisor and thus managed to improve his income. His *Poems* (1851) attracted little attention when they were first published, but recent critics attach more weight to the significance of his poetical work. *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1856), a fantastic Oriental tale, was followed by one of his best novels, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), the first of a long series dealing for the most part with persons



George Meredith

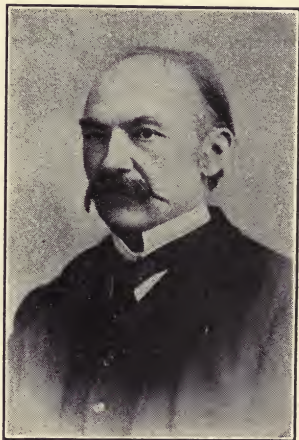
in the upper circles of society. Among these novels are *Evan Harrington* (1861), *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Beauchamp's Career* (1876), *The Egoist* (1879), *The Tragic Comedians* (1881), *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895).

Meredith figures as a sort of Browning among novelists. His stories are developed somewhat in the style of a satiric comedy of manners, with little action, but much analysis of personality and discussion of motive. The characters

use excellent English and coin smart epigrams with great frequency. Meredith continued to write in his own distinctive manner, apparently caring very little whether the public bought his books or not. Like Browning, he was a confirmed optimist. Whether he will ultimately be more highly esteemed for his poetry than for his fiction is uncertain, but no one will question his important position among our more intellectual novelists.

39. Thomas Hardy (1840–) was born in Dorsetshire and received his education in evening classes at King's

College, London. He studied architecture and was successful in that profession, but he took up literature when he was about thirty. Nearly all his novels depict middle-class and peasant life in the large district of southwestern England known as Wessex. His first novel, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), was followed in rapid succession by *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), and *Far from the Mad-ding Crowd* (1874). The last mentioned has usually been



Thomas Hardy

accepted as his best work. There are not many books that cover so completely and so faithfully the varied panorama of English country life. It revealed his rare imaginative quality and his intimate knowledge of the life that he undertook to portray. Other fine novels are *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Woodlanders* (1887), and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891). In 1895 he published *Jude the Obscure*, the least satisfactory of his novels. It was so unfavorably received that Mr. Hardy gave up writing

fiction thereafter. In addition to several volumes of excellent short stories, he published in 1898 a collection of *Wessex Poems*, but these had been written as early as 1865–1870. A most ambitious dramatic undertaking was the trilogy called *The Dynasts* (1904–1908), a vast play in nineteen acts and one hundred and thirty scenes, depicting the era of the Napoleonic Wars. Although intended for mental performance only, parts of it have been successfully produced.

Mr. Hardy is a stern realist and in his novels looks upon life with a pessimism that is well-nigh hopeless, yet he is



Hardy's Birthplace

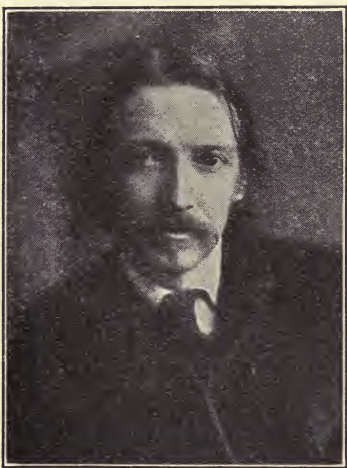
much admired for the setting that he has given to his tragic tales. Unlike Meredith, he did not choose to write of persons in the upper walks of life, but almost uniformly preferred those in humbler surroundings. His characters, whether gentry or rustics, stand out boldly as individuals and fulfill their destiny

in a manner that often suggests the fatalism of Greek drama. There is a vein of racy, bucolic humor that is especially evident in his delineation of country yokels. Hardy likewise shows a subtle sense of fitness in choosing the scenic background for his stories. During his later years Mr. Hardy aspired to poetic laurels, but he has not succeeded in rivaling his reputation as a novelist.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850–1894)

40. An Optimistic Invalid. Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850 and was descended from a line of engineers

who built lighthouses about the coast of Scotland. He was an invalid from infancy and secured a rather irregular education in private schools and at Edinburgh University. After studying for the bar, he finally gave up the prospect of a legal career because of ill-health. For several years he traveled about France, Switzerland, and America in search of a beneficial climate. *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey* (1879) give vivid accounts of his wanderings in a vain quest of health. In 1880 he married Mrs. Fanny Osbourne in San Francisco and collaborated in literary work with his stepson Lloyd Osbourne. He published *The New Arabian Nights* (1882), a volume of clever short stories that are too much neglected nowadays. *Treasure Island* (1883), a glorified "dime novel," won for him a large audience among boys as well as among older readers who retained a taste for thrilling pirate stories. *Prince Otto* (1885) was a romantic story, but it achieved only a moderate success. World-wide fame came to Stevenson with his next story, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), which was developed from an idea that came to him in a dream. This weird allegory of the dual natures in all men has been a familiar book ever since. The remarkable portrayal of the two sharply contrasted characters by Richard Mansfield in the dramatic version of the story did much to spread Stevenson's reputation in America.



Robert Louis Stevenson

Kidnapped (1886), a well-named book for boys, presents an accurate picture of life in the eighteenth century, but wanes in interest before the end. *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) is regarded by most critics as the artistic masterpiece among Stevenson's novels. *Catriona* (1893) was a sequel to *Kidnapped*, and completed the adventures of the hero David Balfour.

Stevenson also wrote some admirable poetry in his *Child's Garden of Verses* (1885) and several volumes of entertaining essays, including *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881) and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882). Three plays written in collaboration with Henley were not so successful. In 1890 he settled in Samoa, where he was much beloved by the natives and accepted as a great personage. There he continued to labor on his numerous literary projects until his death in 1894. A group of native chieftains bore the body of their beloved Tusitala (or teller of tales) up the slope of Mount Vaea to its last resting-place on the summit. At his death he left unfinished two fragments, *St. Ives* (1897) and *Weir of Hermiston* (1897), which gave promise of being his best work.

41. The Personality of Stevenson. The literary work of Stevenson covers a wide range of literary form — epic poetry, ballads, lyrics, romances, plays, historical novels, mystery stories, travels, essays, and letters. In addition to his longer works, Stevenson wrote several of the best short stories in the language. *A Lodging for the Night*, *Markheim*, and *The Sire de Malétroit's Door* are models of their kind. His poetry, apart from a few numbers in the *Child's Garden* and his lovely *Requiem*, is of secondary importance. His essays, though bright and entertaining, are not of the first rank. He will be remembered for his splendid romances, the best of his short stories, and by no means least for the charming letters that reveal one of the most gracious personalities in literature. He has a

large and growing group of admirers who are more interested in Stevenson the man than in Stevenson the writer. It is good to know his opinion of men and books; it is better to delight in the fine tales he told; but it is best of all to become acquainted with the rare soul revealed in the four volumes of his collected correspondence. We admire the great romance writer who died "with a thousand stories in his heart," but we love the valiant spirit that fought down the drag of life-long disease and, though always in the shadow of death, declared in buoyant, ringing tones that life is worth living.

42. Other Novelists. The Victorian era developed many other writers of fiction whose achievements are too important to be overlooked. These men and women contributed in large degree to make the novel the dominant form during the latter part of the century.

Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton (1803-1873) was a leader of fashion and a member of Parliament. For many years he was held in high regard as a writer of very diversified novels. His *Zanoni* (1842) and *A Strange Story* (1862) belong to the class of "tales of terror." *Paul Clifford* (1830) and *Eugene Aram* (1832) are sentimental stories in which criminals are pictured as heroes. *Ernest Maltravers* (1837), *The Caxtons* (1849), and *My Novel* (1853) are conventional social stories of a kind once popular but now regarded as artificial. He is best remembered by two historical novels, *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) and *The Last of the Barons* (1843). His plays, *The Lady of Lyons* (1838) and *Richelieu* (1839), had an enduring career on the English stage and are occasionally revived. Those who like hair-raising ghost stories will enjoy his short tale, *The House and the Brain*.

Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield (1804-1881) was twice Prime Minister, yet found time during a busy political life to write a dozen social and satirical novels. Among those that are best known to modern readers are *Vivian*

Gray (1826), *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), *Lothair* (1870), and *Endymion* (1880). All of these except the first will prove interesting to the student of English political life during the nineteenth century.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810–1865), always known as “Mrs. Gaskell,” is interesting for a single book, *Cranford* (1853), in which she depicted in most realistic fashion and with much humor the country life of provincial England. Her community is made up of spinsters and widows who spend their spare time in local gossip over their tea-cups. She also wrote an excellent biography of Charlotte Brontë.

Charles Reade (1814–1884) was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and a London barrister. Among his many novels the most notable are: *It is Never too Late to Mend* (1856), which exposed the vicious conditions of prison administration and convict labor; *Griffith Gaunt* (1867), a study of jealousy; and *Put Yourself in His Place* (1870), a powerful study of trade-unionism. His masterpiece, *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861), stands quite apart from the rest of his work. In this vigorous tale Reade drew with consummate art a lively picture of the dark period just preceding the dawn of the Reformation. We are taken through the Holland, Germany, France, and Italy of the fifteenth century; we are enthralled by the absorbing story of Margaret and of Gerard, the father of the great scholar Erasmus. For lofty humanity and noble sentiment this story matches the achievement of our leading novelists at their best. More than one critic has acclaimed it the finest historical novel in the language.

Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) covered a wide range of subjects in the thirty-odd novels that he wrote, but was at his best in portraying provincial life among the clergy and the gentry in a cathedral city. *The Warden* (1855) was the first of this series, and was followed by *Barchester Towers* (1857), which is the most widely read of his books. *The*

Last Chronicle of Barset (1867) is the most important of his later works. Trollope took little interest in developing the scenic background for his stories, but in his description of a select social order of English folk he stands almost supreme.

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) was the daughter of a Yorkshire minister and created a sensation with her dramatic novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847), which she dedicated to Thackeray. Indeed, her book was at first even more widely discussed than Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, which had appeared at about the same time. *Jane Eyre* was manifestly the first work of an inexperienced hand, but won its immediate success because of its revelation of a woman's morbid and rebellious spirit. In the tragic sweep of the story, the author laid bare her soul with a frankness that startled many readers of the mid-Victorian period. She had something of the manner of Jane Austen in her minute realism, but was far more unrestrained and emotional in her work. Two other novels, *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853), were less successful. Her talented sisters, Emily (1818–1848) and Anne (1820–1849), also wrote novels. Emily's somber tale of terror, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), has many admirers and is regarded by some as better than Charlotte's work. Anne's two novels, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) and *Agnes Grey* (1848), are less important.



Charlotte Brontë

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) was a Cambridge man who entered the Church and became a stanch advocate of "muscular Christianity." In his early novels, *Yeast*

(1848) and *Alton Locke* (1850), he assailed social conditions among agricultural laborers and the tailors in the London "sweatshops." *Hypatia* (1853) is a minute study of a remarkable period — the Neo-paganism of Alexandria in the fifth century, when Greek and Christian civilizations were in their final grapple for control of the world. *Westward Ho!* (1855) is a spirited tale of the sea-rovers of Elizabethan days, when England wrested the supremacy of the sea from Spain. In its pages the venturesome, care-free Devonshire men live again and go forth to battle with the storms of the Atlantic or with the foe from beyond the seas. Few books have won a firmer place in the hearts of boys who enjoy tales of heroic exploits. There is no maudlin sentiment, no cheap moralizing, but a succession of lively adventures with the tang of the brine ever present. *Hereward the Wake* (1866) gives a graphic account of life in England shortly after the Norman Conquest. Kingsley also wrote a charming story for children, *Water-Babies* (1863), and in his poem *Andromeda* he composed some of the finest classical hexameters in the language.

Wilkie Collins (1824–1889) was a friend and collaborator of Dickens. He is famous for three mystery stories, *The Woman in White* (1860), *No Name* (1862), and *The Moonstone* (1868), which are still admired for their intricate plot construction. Such novels represent the normal development of the "tale of terror." *The Moonstone* is said to have the most complicated plot in literature.

Richard D. Blackmore (1825–1900), a barrister and teacher, wrote more than a dozen novels, but only one achieved fame. *Lorna Doone* (1869) is not only a vigorous romance of the days of Monmouth's Rebellion, but a book abounding in fine descriptive passages about the scenery of Exmoor. This story of a notorious robber clan, a gigantic hero, and a lady fair is well written in a wholesome fashion, with evident zest for the good things that life has to offer.

Dinah Mulock Craik (1826–1887) also wrote many novels that were popular in their day, but only one, *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856), has survived to assure her a place among the novelists.

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898) is not a familiar name, but who has not heard of Lewis Carroll? Many delighted readers of those immortal phantasies, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1866) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1870), do not know that the learned mathematician of Oxford University and the famous Lewis Carroll were the same person. Dodgson had two great hobbies in life—mathematics and children—but he gave his best to the children.

Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834–1903) was a manufacturer, born in Birmingham, whose literary reputation rests almost entirely on one novel, *John Inglesant* (1881), a remarkable analysis of a human character living during the Civil Wars in England.

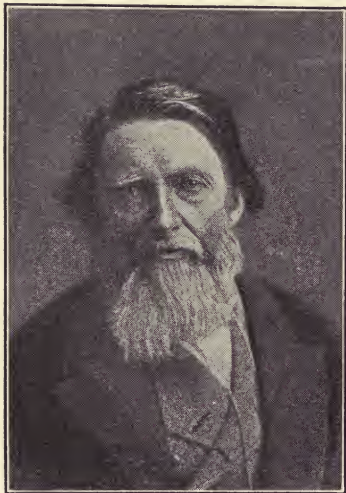
William Black (1841–1898) was a Scotchman who went to London and there became one of the prolific novelists of the period. Among the few of his books that are still read are *A Daughter of Heth* (1871) and *Princess of Thule* (1874). *Judith Shakespeare* (1884) gives an interesting picture of Shakespeare's later days at Stratford and his younger daughter's romance.

George Gissing (1857–1903) was born at Wakefield and educated at Owens College, Manchester. After spending part of his early life in America, he wandered about from country to country, finally returning to England to engage in literature. He had a desperate struggle with poverty. Much of his fiction deals with the unfortunate people of the lower classes and depicts most grimly their drab lives. Among his best books are *The Unclassed* (1884), *Demos* (1886), *Thyrza* (1887), *The Nether World* (1889), *New Grub Street* (1891), and *Human Odds and Ends* (1897). Most of these titles give some idea of the human dregs

with which the stories deal. *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903) is largely autobiographical.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

43. A Sheltered Youth. John Ruskin, the only child of John James Ruskin, a wealthy wine-merchant, was born in London in 1819. His father, who was fond of good pictures and good books, gave the boy ample opportunity to develop an appreciation for both. John was most carefully educated by private tutors and enjoyed the privileges of foreign travel. At fifteen he saw the Alps and the scenic beauty of Italy, which made a lasting impression. He entered Christ Church, Oxford, in 1836 and won the Newdigate Prize three years later. Ill-health protracted his stay at Oxford, but he



John Ruskin

took a degree in 1842. Although his original intention was to enter the Church, he turned to the writing of literature. The first volume of his *Modern Painters* (1843) aroused much discussion in the field of art. He was especially enthusiastic in praising the work of the artist Turner, whose admirable landscape painting had been received by the critics with scorn and even ridicule. The book was written with a florid brilliancy of diction that brought Ruskin as a young man of twenty-four into the front rank of prose writers. A second volume appeared in 1846; three more vol-

umes completed the undertaking between 1856–1860. This elaborate work assured Ruskin a virtual dictatorship in questions pertaining to art criticism. His other important books dealing with art were *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853). He was much interested in the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites and wrote in defense of their views in his *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851). Ruskin married Euphemia Gray in 1848, but the marriage was not a happy one. They separated in 1855 and Mrs. Ruskin later became the wife of the artist Sir John E. Millais.

44. A Social Reformer. In middle age Ruskin developed a deep interest in social and economic questions, and gave much of his time and money to the improvement of conditions among the lower classes. *Unto this Last* (1860) and *Munera Pulveris* (1862) were books in which he first proclaimed his economic theories. Other writers on social questions did not accept his somewhat sentimental views, but he went resolutely on with his work. *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), which is now his most popular book, included two lectures on books and reading, and on the education of women. A third lecture, on *The Mystery of Life*, is usually neglected because of its pessimistic tone. *The Ethics of the Dust* (1866) is a series of lectures addressed to “little housewives,” but is largely devoted to mineralogy. *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866) was made up of three lectures entitled *Work*, *Traffic*, and *War*. From 1870–1879 Ruskin was Professor of Art at Oxford University. During that period he addressed almost a hundred monthly letters to the workingmen of England under the title of *Fors Clavigera* (1871). Later he bought a beautiful estate at Brantwood on Lake Coniston, in the Lake District, and there he spent his declining years, writing his autobiography called *Praeterita* (1885–1889). He had been subject to illness during much of his life and was an invalid toward the end. The large fortune, said to be as much as £180,000, which he had inherited,

was almost entirely dispersed for charitable and philanthropic objects before his death. He died at Brantwood in 1900 and was buried at Coniston.

His life had certain tragic aspects in spite of his apparent advantages. As a youngster he was a "poor little rich" boy, carefully kept from toys and from playmates, and subject to a stern set of rules prepared for his daily conduct. He was coddled and supervised by his parents well into middle life. His marriage was unfortunate, and in his later years he realized that many of his fine plans to make the world anew had gone wrong. Yet he left behind him a great memorial in the more than a hundred books and pamphlets that had come from his busy pen.

45. Ruskin's Influence. The literary works of Ruskin fall into two well-defined groups, the art criticism of his earlier years and the economic writings of his later period, when he sought to be recognized as one of the leaders in social reform. In his works on art Ruskin did much to develop popular appreciation not merely for great pictures, but for the beauties of nature which the painter must study intimately before he can hope to reproduce them on canvas. Ruskin's field of observation included virtually everything — the leaf, the cloud, the wave, the rock, the sky, the tree-trunk, the hoar-frost — each described with minute detail and unusual insight. He had the artist's keen sense for color and wrote the most remarkable descriptions of scenes that involved rich color schemes. In prose he did much the same service that Wordsworth performed in poetry, in directing men to a fuller and deeper appreciation of the glories of nature. Never before had Englishmen the opportunity to read such impassioned descriptions of great Alpine scenery, the beauty of peak or glacier, of hovering clouds, or the setting sun. DeQuincey alone of modern writers approaches the gorgeous colorful "prose poetry" of Ruskin at his best. What others attained in a chance

passage of exalted writing, Ruskin seemed able to do at all times and on any theme.

In his enthusiastic devotion to social reform, Ruskin undoubtedly felt at the outset that he would accomplish great results. His sensitive nature was shocked by the rank failure of civilization to live up to its opportunities. Although he shuddered at the misery and degradation of the poor, he felt that they merely needed intelligent leaders to show them the way to better things. He helped to establish museums and art galleries; he coöperated in the activities of night-schools and workingmen's colleges. His failure to achieve his ideals was not to his discredit; like most idealists he had overestimated the desire of the lowly to help in the heavy task of social regeneration. When he became conscious of antagonizing forces, he frequently lost his temper and railed bitterly at conditions. At such times he was dogmatic and intolerant of the views expressed by others. His style had such admirable qualities as clearness, brilliance, and imagination, but he developed the habit of constructing huge sentences that sprawled their ornate length over his pages. He also yielded to the temptation of indulging in "fine writing" for its own sake. Ruskin's fondness for unusual and misleading titles has undoubtedly curtailed the circle of his readers. The choice of allegorical or classical titles for books intended for the masses showed lack of judgment. No one expects a book called *Sesame and Lilies* to be about the advantages of reading, and few workmen would pick up a book called *Fors Clavigera* to find out what it is about. When he did choose a conventional title it was often deceptive. Misguided farmers who bought Ruskin's *Notes on the Construction of Sheep Folds* were justified in their disgust to find that it is a book advocating reform in Church government and has nothing to do with four-legged sheep.

In spite of his errors of judgment, there is much valuable

material in Ruskin's social writings. Ideas that he stated badly or perhaps prematurely are finding application in various ways to-day. He was a sincere advocate of all that he considered essential to make human existence happier and healthier for all. Surely no man ever took up the problems of social reform with less selfish motives. The world has rarely shown gratitude to those who originate noble plans for the betterment of humanity. Ruskin was not the first "visionary" to be scoffed and ridiculed by a thankless generation that later accepted many of the same ideas with complacent esteem for its own intelligence.

46. John Henry Newman (1801-1890) was a graduate of Trinity College, Oxford, and later entered the Anglican Church. His early manhood was spent in an academic atmosphere, as he became vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford. He was a leader in the so-called Oxford Movement, which was a revolt against the liberalizing tendencies of modern philosophy and science. Like the Pre-Raphaelite Movement in art, it went back to medievalism for its inspiration. In 1845 he entered the Roman Catholic Church and prepared for the priesthood. From 1854 to 1858 he was Rector of the Catholic



John Henry Newman

University of Dublin and in 1879 was created a cardinal. Most of his writings deal with religious subjects. His spiritual autobiography, which he entitled *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), was an answer to a charge brought by Charles Kingsley. His friends enjoyed the brilliant style of his writings, but were not always convinced by his

arguments. Newman wrote a remarkably clear style that is admired by many who are more interested in the manner than the matter of his works. Some of his best prose is found in a volume of essays and lectures entitled *The Idea of a University* (1852). He was a man of great spiritual power and will always be remembered for his fine poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*, and for his beautiful hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light."

47. Scientific Writers. The notable scientific advance made during the Victorian age produced a number of writers whose works are not without literary significance. These men were the pioneers in proclaiming many important principles that are now generally accepted, but which, when first proclaimed, led to long and bitter controversy. It is difficult for the present generation to understand the virulence with which many of the teachings of these learned men were assailed in the past.

Charles Darwin (1809–1882) was a Cambridge man who devoted his life to the study of natural history. He announced the doctrine of evolution and discussed it fully in two notable works, *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). These books were of prime importance in shaping the course of contemporary scientific investigation.

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) was for some years a civil engineer and a writer of critical reviews, but he devoted the last fifty years of his long life to philosophical study. His most important early work was his *Principles of Psychology* (1855), in which he anticipated Darwin's idea of evolution. He devoted his best years to a vast system of *Synthetic Philosophy* (1862–1898) in ten volumes, in which he undertook to harmonize the idea of evolution with the discoveries of modern science.

Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895) studied medicine and spent four years as an assistant surgeon in the British Navy. He became a colleague of Tyndall at the Royal Institution and later was elected Professor of Comparative Anatomy

at the Royal College of Surgeons. His books deal mainly with zoölogy and physiology. He was one of Darwin's chief defenders while the clamor over evolution raged most furiously. His *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews* (1870) are of a higher literary quality than most scientific writings.

John Tyndall (1820–1893) was, like Spencer, an engineer for several years. Later he became Professor of Natural Philosophy at the Royal Institution and was its Resident Director for twenty years. He made a study of Alpine glaciers with Huxley and wrote extensively in various fields of physical science.

48. Other Essayists. Among the other prose writers of the Victorian age are two essayists who should not be overlooked. Walter Pater (1839–1894) was an Oxford graduate who became a Fellow at Brasenose College and later was chosen Dean of that college. He spent most of his life at Oxford, writing for the reviews and studying widely in the classical and Renaissance periods. His principal works are *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), an interpretation of the pagan character, *Imaginary Portraits* (1887), and *Appreciations* (1889), a series of critical essays. Pater was one of the leading stylists of his age. Few writers ever took such pains to make their prose so thoroughly individual and free from blemish.

Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), a graduate of Eton College and of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, devoted his life to literary and biographical undertakings. His first wife was a daughter of Thackeray. He was one of the editors of *The Cornhill Magazine*, and for nine years directed the production of the great *Dictionary of National Biography*, which was eventually completed in sixty-three volumes, to which six volumes have since been added. Besides a *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), he wrote several volumes of essays entitled *Hours in a Library* (1874–1879) and *Studies of a Biographer* (1898).

CHAPTER XII

CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

1. The Spirit of the Age. It is usually difficult to appraise a literary movement going on before our eyes. There is a lack of perspective when we attempt to determine its relation to what has gone before. We are in the midst of significant social changes and we find it difficult to see far ahead. Life has be-

come so complex to the present generation that we accept with mere passing attention various evidences of scientific progress that would formerly have been regarded as momentous. The nineteenth century produced what were conceived to be the greatest inventions of science, apparently leav-



The British Museum

ing little for posterity to accomplish, yet within less than two decades the new century made the automobile a universal vehicle, perfected the aëroplane, and accomplished apparent impossibilities in the field of wireless telegraphy and telephony. In our social life the moving picture became an international institution, not only occupying the time that many persons might otherwise have devoted to reading, but developing a taste for rapid, melodramatic action on the

screen, thus destroying in many instances an appreciation for deliberate, finished art.

2. The Trend of Literature. During the past few decades our popular magazines have multiplied in great numbers, and their editors are making increasing demands for serial novels and short stories. It is conceded from many a publisher's point of view that these magazines have developed into great publicity mediums and that the reading matter they contain is merely an excuse for circulating the profitable advertising pages or columns. However, these publishers realize that they must establish relatively high literary standards to maintain the circulation of their periodicals, and they make attractive offers to the best writers of the day for whatever work these writers have at hand. In spite of this constant temptation to speed production, much of our contemporary literature is well-written and earns for its authors far more than the poor hack-writers of former days ever dreamed of getting. Unfortunately, the volume of this fairly good literature is now so great that the reading public hastens from one novel to the next and in the discussion of to-day's book forgets what it read yesterday. Comparatively few novels now claim any widespread attention six months after their publication.

Under such conditions it is easy to understand why we have few writers who are willing to spend one or two years in shaping a novel into a work of art. Most of them prefer to write rapidly and to maintain merely as high a standard of excellence as their public expects of them. In providing for the high-strung contemporary reader such literary excitement as he craves, they have made the novel more realistic than it was in the calm days of Victoria and have discussed with little reserve the perplexing problems that agitate the present generation. The short story, especially of the type that involves violent action or radical ideas, is more popular than ever. Poetry was rather generally neglected up to the

outbreak of the Great War in 1914 when, under the stress of a real inspiration, much admirable verse came into being. The fine lyrical quality of the poetry written in England during those four fateful years of strife, when civilization itself hung in the balance, made manifest that even in a prosaic, materialistic age the fundamental virtues still glow in the heart of man.

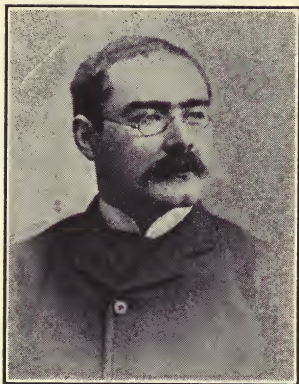
To-day, in the immediate wake of the most stupendous military clash of all history, there is a widespread feeling that the world must be made anew. The old order of things has been rejected; the present disposition is to minimize the past. Great social and political changes seem to be impending and many problems of life still await solution. A nation speaks through its literary men as well as through its statesmen. Most of the writers who remain to be considered are still living, and to them we must look for whatever spiritual message England has for a world reborn.

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-

3. A New Note in Literature. A certain Reverend George Macdonald had three daughters, each of whom was married to an artist. One daughter became the wife of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, one of England's leading Pre-Raphaelite painters; another became the wife of Sir Edward Poynter, also a distinguished painter and the late President of the Royal Academy. The third daughter was married to John Lockwood Kipling, better known as an illustrator and a sculptor than as a painter. Her husband was the least famous of the artistic trio, but she became the mother of the most famous of contemporary writers.

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, in 1865 and at the age of five was sent to England for his education at the United Service College at Westward Ho, Devonshire. Apparently he had no inclination to secure a university

education. He returned to India when he was sixteen and for seven years served as an assistant editor on newspapers in Lahore and Allahabad. To these papers he contributed his early poems and short stories. The poems were first collected as *Departmental Ditties* (1886). His first volume of short stories, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888), marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the English short story. Readers of the unusual tales asked, "Who is



Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling?" Their curiosity was soon gratified. Other collections such as *Soldiers Three* (1888) and *The Phantom Rickshaw* (1888) followed almost immediately. Kipling returned to England by way of China and America. His experiences between San Francisco and New York form the subject of his *American Notes* (1891), which bore the same title as Dickens's unmannerly book, but which was written in a very different, al-

though critical spirit. He condemned our reporters, our politics, and our slang, but he was enthusiastic in his praise of the American girl. This opinion he confirmed in 1892 when he married Caroline Balestier and lived for several years at Brattleboro, Vermont. Meanwhile he had brought out several other notable books. *The Courting of Dinah Shadd* (1890) contained two excellent stories, *The Man Who Was* and *Without Benefit of Clergy*. *Life's Handicap* (1891) included some of the best of his Indian stories. His novel, *The Light that Failed* (1891), tells a tragic story and in spite of its merit is less popular than his shorter tales. *The Naulahka* (1892), another novel, was written in collaboration with his brother-in-law. His next collection

of poetry, *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), was an immediate success. Such poems as *Mandalay*, *Fuzzy Wuzzy*, and *Danny Deever* were at once accepted as classics. *Many Inventions* (1893) was another fine collection of Indian tales. *The Jungle Book* (1894) was a revelation to English readers — even to those who had come to expect novelty from Mr. Kipling. Never was the wild life and the lore of the Indian jungle so wonderfully set forth. A *Second Jungle Book* (1895) soon followed and gave further illustration of the author's almost uncanny knowledge of the four-footed kind.

4. **Kipling's Infinite Variety.** There were still greater surprises in store for the critics who felt that Mr. Kipling had written himself out after publishing his two remarkable books on the animal-lore of the East. His third collection of poetry, *The Seven Seas* (1896), added several notable poems to our literature, such as *The Liner She's a Lady* and *The Mary Gloster*, but the greatest of all was *McAndrew's Hymn*. In his next story, *Captains Courageous* (1897), he described how a pampered boy achieved his social salvation on a cod-fishing vessel. *The Day's Work* (1898), accepted by many as Mr. Kipling's most brilliant collection of short stories, includes *The Bridge Builders*, *Bread upon the Waters*, *The Brushwood Boy*, *The Maltese Cat*, and *William the Conqueror*. Concerning the last-named story one critic said that its heroine was the only attractive girl that Mr. Kipling ever drew — and he called her William. *Stalky and Co.* (1899) was received with less favor. It is a boisterous story of school-life in England and included some of the author's own experiences at Westward Ho. *Kim* (1901) is the most successful of his longer stories and tells a tale of thrilling adventure in the British secret service in the Himalayas. *The Five Nations* (1903), Mr. Kipling's fourth collection of verse, was largely devoted to occasional poetry, such as *The Truce of the Bear*, but also included the beautiful *Reces-*

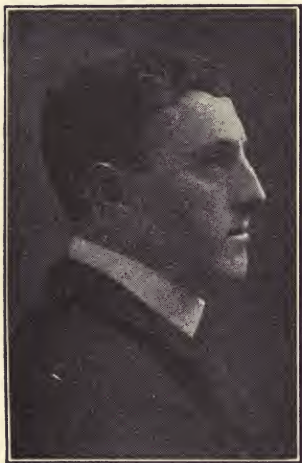
sional written for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. Among the more important of his later books are *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906), a most original and fantastic treatment of English history; *Actions and Reactions* (1909), a collection of his maturer short stories; and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910), which reveals flashes of the older imaginative manner and is a sequel to *Puck of Pook's Hill*.

It may be readily conceded that Mr. Kipling yields too frequently to an inclination to display his technical knowledge in detail and that he has acquired an elliptical style that is at times annoying; the fact remains that he is the acknowledged master of the short story to-day. He deals with a great variety of unusual subjects in an unusual way. He has traveled widely, has seen much, and has observed

well. Few writers had similar opportunities to see life under so many conditions and to record it so fully. There is remarkable native vigor in his best work and an abiding love for the great world of out-of-doors. In most of his work he displays a shrewd humor and a mastery of phrasing that combine to win for him a high place in the estimation of his contemporaries.

5. Stephen Phillips (1864-1915) was born in Somertown, near Oxford, and attended the Stratford Grammar School. He studied for the Civil Service,

but became an actor. His earlier poems, such as *Marpessa* (1890) and *Christ in Hades* (1896), attracted considerable attention on account of their rich diction and memorable lines, but his fame became general in 1897 when his



Stephen Phillips

Poems received the Academy Prize. His later successes were largely in the field of poetic drama. *Paolo and Francesca* (1899) is a passionate love-drama based on a brief episode in Dante's *Inferno*. *Herod* (1900) drew its inspiration from the Bible and has much of the majestic and sonorous tone of Elizabethan drama at its best. *Ulysses* (1902), based on the Homeric legend, tells the familiar story of the hero's enchantment by Calypso, and his return to the faithful Penelope. *The Sin of David* (1904) is not a Biblical drama, but a love story of the Civil Wars in England. These four finely conceived poetic plays surpass almost all other efforts in that form since Shelley's *The Cenci*. Phillips's *New Poems* (1907) and his later dramas were less favorably received, and their comparative failure helped to embitter his last years. Phillips was far more successful than Tennyson and Browning in writing his poetic dramas because of his practical knowledge of stage-craft, which enabled him to avoid the mistakes usually made by poets who are not familiar with theatrical limitations. Phillips had the gift of coining beautiful individual lines that sparkle like jewels in the midst of his stately blank verse. Posterity may yet grant him a higher place than the present generation seems inclined to concede.



John Masefield

6. John Masefield (1874—) was born in Shropshire and became a sailor when a boy. After many voyages that carried him to distant ports he tried his hand at farm laboring and various other activities; at one time he even served

as a helper in a New York bar-room. He saw much of life all over the world and in his work reflects some of the brutality and coarseness of his own experiences. During the Great War he served with a hospital unit and wrote a book on the Gallipoli campaign. Mr. Masfield's *Gallipoli* is one of the recognized classics of the war. With great power he narrates the harrowing details of one of the most disastrous expeditions in England's military history. His earlier works include *Salt Water Ballads* (1902), *On the Spanish Main* (1906), *The Tragedy of Nan* (1908), and *Ballads* (1910). Among the more recent works are a number of spirited dramatic tales, told in verse, such as *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), *Daffodil Fields* (1913), and *Reynard the Fox* (1919). Mr. Masfield is the



Alfred Noyes

most popular of the younger generation of poets who have turned to verse as a medium for effective story-telling. He surprises his readers at every turn by crisp, clean-cut narration of incident in language unexpectedly vigorous and appropriate.

7. Alfred Noyes (1880-) was born in Staffordshire and received his education at Exeter College, Oxford. He not only became noted as a poet during his undergraduate days, but announced his intention of adopt-

ing poetry as a profession. His *Loom of Years* (1902) and *The Flower of Old Japan* (1903) were well received, but his fame really dates from his *Poems* (1904), which contained his popular poem, *The Barrel-Organ*. As one punster expressed it, "The *Barrel-Organ* made Noyes." Since then he has brought

out with much success his vigorous epic poem *Drake* (1908), which was well received by a generation inclined to look with disapproval on epic poems; his *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1912), a rollicking collection of poetical tales giving entertaining glimpses of the days of Shakespeare, rare old Ben Jonson, and Raleigh; and *A Salute from the Fleet* (1915), containing most of his poetry dealing with the earlier period of the Great War. In 1914 Mr. Noyes became a Professor of English at Princeton University and conducts his classes there during one term of each college year. He also gives frequent public lectures and readings from his works. Among the younger lyrical poets of England he is the best known and the most popular. His verse has a fine singing quality, and he handles the long lyrical measures with a skill almost equal to that of Swinburne.

8. **Rupert Brooke (1887–1915)** was a native of Rugby, where his father was a master; he received his education at King's College, Cambridge. He was a poet of great promise and seemed destined to a high place among the younger singers. His death during the Dardanelles campaign of the Great War and his burial on the island of Lemnos give a tender significance to the opening lines of his most famous sonnet:

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field

That is forever England.

Much of his poetry was intellectual and speculative in quality. He carefully avoided sentimentality in his interesting ruminations on man's relation to the world at large. His work showed the extravagance of youthful genius, but it was full of anticipation of fine things to come.

9. **Recent Fiction.** Many men and women who began to write novels during the later years of the Victorian era have carried on their work during the present century and are still to be counted among the leaders in their chosen

field. Only a few of the more notable of these novelists can be mentioned in passing.

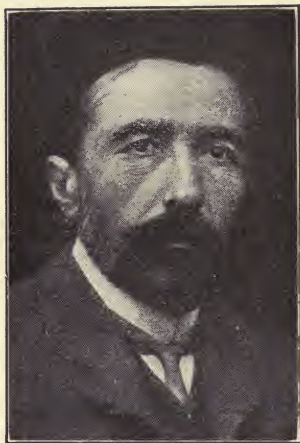
William DeMorgan (1839–1917) is an interesting figure because of the late date at which he took to literature. Born in London, the son of the well-known Professor Augustus DeMorgan, he embarked early on a business career. At first he became interested in the production of stained glass, but later he devoted his best efforts to ceramics and became an expert in lusters. At the age of sixty-six he began writing and produced his first novel, *Joseph Vance* (1906), which was at once heralded as a masterpiece in the style of Dickens. Among the best of his later novels are *Alice-for-Short* (1907), *Somehow Good* (1908), and *It Never Can Happen Again* (1909). None of these attained quite the same popularity as *Joseph Vance*. The novels written after those mentioned were still less favorably received. Most of them were too long to command the attention of this busy age, and they were more like echoes of Victorian novels than contemporary fiction.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward (1851–1920), a niece of Matthew Arnold, attracted widespread attention in religious circles with her important novel *Robert Elsmere* (1888). Later she produced many admirable stories of social life in England, notably *Marcella* (1894), *Eleanor* (1900), *Lady Rose's Daughter* (1903), *The Marriage of William Ashe* (1905), *Fenwick's Career* (1906), *Eltham House* (1915), and *Missing* (1917). The last-named is the story of an English soldier who suffers from shell-shock during the Great War.

Joseph Conrad (1857–) is a Slav whose real name is Josef Konrad Korzeniowski. He knew no English until he was nineteen and published nothing until he was thirty-eight. For many years he was master of a sailing-vessel and became an accomplished linguist. At first he intended to write in French, but fortunately for our recent literature he chose English. He developed an admirable, individual

style that is best reflected in such books as *The Nigger on the Narcissus* (1897), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Youth* (1902), *Typhoon* (1903), *Nostromo* (1904), *Chance* (1914), *Victory* (1916), and *The Arrow of Gold* (1919). Of these *Lord Jim* and *Typhoon* are perhaps the best in which to become acquainted with Conrad's work. No English writer of to-day wields a style more racy or more carefully wrought than that of Conrad. He has already been acclaimed a master of English prose.

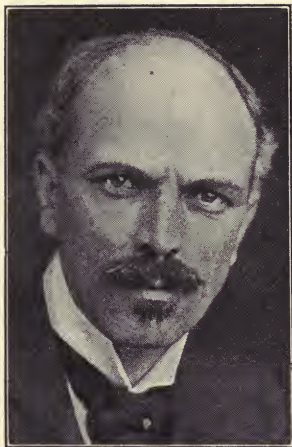
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-), physician and author, deserves mention for two good historical novels, *Micah Clarke* (1888) and *The White Company* (1890), as well as for the remarkable series of detective stories in which Sherlock Holmes is the central figure. More recently he has compiled an extensive history of the Great War.



Joseph Conrad

Eden Phillpotts (1862-) was born in India, as the son of an English captain stationed there. He is the author of numerous juvenile books and of several plays, but he is best known for his novels portraying Dartmoor life. He has made that section of England quite as much his own as Hardy appropriated the neighboring district of Wessex. Among his best novels are: *Lying Prophets* (1896), *Children of the Mist* (1898), *The Striking Hours* (1901), *The River* (1902), *The Secret Woman* (1905), *The Mother* (1908), *The Haven* (1909), *The Thief of Virtue* (1910), *Old Delabole* (1915), and *Green Alleys* (1916). Mr. Phillpotts is an uneven writer and apparently writes too much, but at his best he compares favorably with Mr. Hardy.

Maurice Hewlett (1861-) is a London barrister who spent several years as a keeper of the Land Revenue Records and thus became acquainted with the archaic diction that marks his earlier novels. His charming book, *Earthwork out of Tuscany* (1895), was followed by a suc-



Maurice Hewlett

cession of romantic and historical novels: *The Forest Lovers* (1898), *Richard Yea and Nay* (1900), and *The Queen's Quair* (1904). Among his later social novels are a few that have met with favor, but Mr. Hewlett was most successful in his interpretation of the glamor and romance of medieval days. He has also written several volumes of poetry and poetical plays.

William J. Locke (1863-) was born in Trinidad and educated at Cambridge. He studied architecture, but later turned with more zest to literature. His satirical and social novels include *Idols* (1898), *The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne* (1905), *The Beloved Vagabond* (1906), *Septimus* (1909), *Stella Maris* (1913), and *The Fortunate Youth* (1914). Locke's works reveal a combination of quizzical humor and subtlety of thought that detaches him somewhat from most of his contemporaries.

Robert Hichens (1864-) was born in Kent and was trained for a musical career. His first literary success was *The Green Carnation* (1894), an anonymous satire on the esthetic craze of the day. He also wrote *The Londoners* (1897), *The Woman with the Fan* (1904), *The Garden of Allah* (1905), *The Call of the Blood* (1906), and *A Spirit in Prison* (1908). These are well-told stories, rather melodramatic

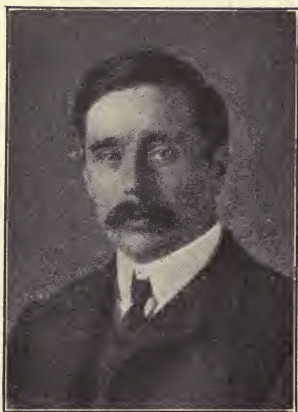
at times, but related with more skill and finish than is customary in such writing.

Leonard Merrick (1864-) was born in London and educated at Brighton College. He was intended for the law, but had a varied career on the stage and in the diamond mines of South Africa. He wrote many plays and short stories, but has been most successful in writing such novels as *Cynthia* (1896), *The Actor-Manager* (1898), *Conrad in Quest of His Youth* (1904), and *The Position of Peggy* (1911). His best novels deal with theatrical life and reflect much of his own experience.

Israel Zangwill (1864-), a Jewish writer, was born in London and became a journalist. His earlier success was achieved by his various collections of short stories dealing with Jewish life: *Children of the Ghetto* (1892), *Ghetto Tragedies* (1893), and *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898). Among his more successful novels are *The Master* (1895) and *The Mantle of Elijah* (1900). After the great popular expression of approval that greeted his play, *The Melting Pot* (1909), he undertook a series of dramas on various subjects, such as *The War God* (1911), *The Next Religion* (1912), and *Plaster Saints* (1914). None of these, however, won the same degree of favor as *The Melting Pot*.

Herbert G. Wells (1866-) was born in Kent and studied under Huxley in the Royal College of Science. He first attracted attention as a writer of weird scientific stories in the manner of Jules Verne. Among these were *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). From these exercises he developed an interest in social evolution and produced a series of interesting stories in which he portrayed a world made better than we know it to-day. These stories include *When the Sleeper Awakes* (1899), *Anticipations* (1901), *Mankind in the Making* (1903), *A Modern Utopia* (1905), and *New Worlds for Old* (1908). The third phase of Mr. Wells's

career as a novelist produced stories of more general interest in which he discussed with much acumen various social



Herbert G. Wells

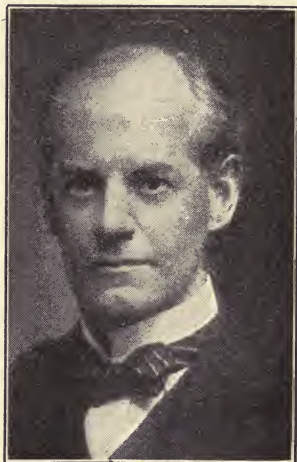
problems of the day. Among these stories are *Tono-Bungay* (1909), *Ann Veronica* (1909), and *Marriage* (1912). *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (1916) was the most popular of the novels that had the Great War for a background. *Joan and Peter* (1918) discusses the English system of education and exposes its shortcomings. Mr. Wells is usually very much in earnest and frankly uses fiction as a means to an end. He aims to make his readers think

seriously and he employs his story as a lure to induce such thought.

Arnold Bennett (1867—) is, like Mr. Noyes, a Staffordshire man. He used his early surroundings as a setting for his stories of "The Five Towns" which include some admirable studies of provincial English life. Mr. Bennett writes much and unevenly. A great deal of his earlier work is negligible. His reputation was established on a firm basis by *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), which narrates an entertaining story of "The Five Towns" and of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. This successful novel was followed by a trilogy of stories, *Clayhanger* (1910), *Hilda Lessways* (1911), and *These Twain* (1914). Among his numerous plays and satiric comedies the best is *Milestones* (1916).

John Galsworthy (1867—), a native of Coombe, Surrey, and an honor graduate of Oxford, has won his laurels both as novelist and dramatist. He is an author whose work

has shown gradual improvement in technical skill and who writes with a keener appreciation for style than most of his contemporaries. He excels in character analysis and in the satirical realism with which he depicts the clashes of caste in England. Among the best of his stories are *The Man of Devon* (1901), *The Island Pharisees* (1904), *The Man of Property* (1906), *The Country House* (1907), *The Patrician* (1911), *The Freelanders* (1915), and *Saint's Progress* (1919). As a dramatist Mr. Galsworthy is even a more determined social teacher than as a novelist. He exposes the distinctions made between rich and poor offenders, lays bare the iniquities of the penal system, and makes manifest the motives that underlie the perpetual strife between capital and labor. Among his best plays are *The Silver Box* (1906), *Joy* (1907), *Strife* (1909), *Justice* (1910), *The Pigeon* (1912), and *The Eldest Son* (1912). Mr. Galsworthy has also written some of the most charming short stories in recent literature.



John Galsworthy

While most of these novelists carried the Victorian tradition into contemporary literature, there are distinct tendencies noticeable in the more recent works of Messrs. Hewlett, Locke, Wells, and Galsworthy. There is now an inclination to discuss more intimately and more realistically the lives of the characters in their relationship to the growing complexity of modern life. The historical novel is generally neglected in current fiction, because our novelists realize that in view of the rapid and far-reaching adjustment of

contemporary society our prime interest lies in the portrayal of the life that is going on before our eyes. Still further detachment from the Victorian novel is noted in the stories written by such younger men as Messrs. Hugh Walpole, Compton MacKenzie, Coningsby Dawson, Gilbert Cannan, and Frank Swinnerton, and by such younger women as Miss May Sinclair and Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith. However, the time is not yet ripe for determining the relative significance of these and others of the present generation of writers.

10. Recent Drama. During the early Victorian period there was no important literary drama. The poetic plays written by Tennyson, Browning, and others did not make stage-history. A decided improvement in play-writing for the stage came shortly after 1880, when Sir Arthur W. Pinero and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones began their important careers as practical dramatists. Within another decade the influence of the great Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), made itself felt in England as well as on the Continent. He did much to strip stage technique of its artificial trappings and to make the presentation of drama more realistic.

Sir Arthur W. Pinero (1855-), the son of a London solicitor, became an actor in early manhood, but turned dramatist at twenty-six. His earlier plays were not important, but as he improved his work, he revealed a grasp of stage-craft unsurpassed by his contemporaries. He discarded the conventional "happy ending" to let his serious drama work itself out to its logical conclusion. He is at all times a practical playwright who writes for the stage and not for literary effect. Among the more than forty plays that he wrote are: *The Magistrate* (1885), *Sweet Lavender* (1888), *The Profligate* (1889), *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), *Trelawney of the Wells* (1898), *The Gay Lord Quex* (1899), *Iris* (1901), *His House in Order* (1906), *The Thunderbolt* (1908), and *Mid Channel* (1909). His

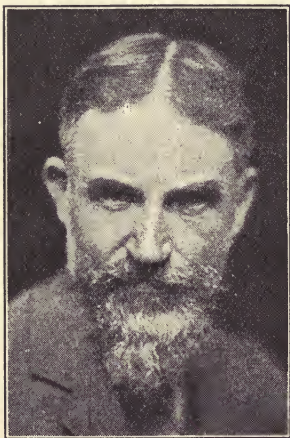
later plays are less important. Most critics regard *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* as the most notable of all these plays. The date of its production is accepted as the beginning of a new era in the history of English drama.

Henry Arthur Jones (1851-) is not only a playwright of note, but he has done valiant service as a writer and lecturer to bring about a better understanding of the modern theater and its ideals. His first popular success was won with a melodramatic play, *The Silver King* (1882), which was followed by *Saints and Sinners* (1884), *The Middleman* (1889), *The Dancing Girl* (1891), *The Liars* (1897), *Mrs. Dane's Defense* (1900), and *The Hypocrites* (1906). Mr. Jones is not as successful as Sir Arthur Pinero in handling his themes or in pursuing the newer technique of his art. His plays are frequently well built to a strong climax and are then permitted to end badly, because the dramatist has not the courage of his own convictions.

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900), a talented writer of poems and stories, also produced a number of clever satirical comedies, of which the best are *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *The Ideal Husband* (1895), and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). The characters in his plays talk in brilliant epigram and delight in paradox. They are more intent upon saying smart things than upon revealing any real personality.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-) was born in Dublin, but went to London, where he became a critic of literature and music. He wrote numerous pamphlets on socialism and a group of novels of no great merit. He is best known for a remarkable series of plays characterized by much wit, originality of treatment, and long explanatory prefaces that are frequently better than the plays themselves. From the first he used fiction and drama for social propaganda. Among the best of his plays are *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1895), *You Never Can Tell* (1896), *Man and*

Superman (1903), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Fanny's First Play* (1911), *Androcles and the Lion* (1913), and *Pygmalion* (1914). Mr. Shaw has been very successful in advertising his social heresies and in keeping public attention focused as much as possible upon himself. He has entertaining



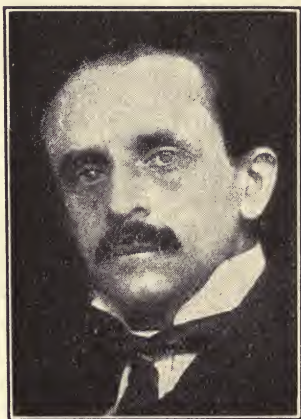
George Bernard Shaw

opinions on all subjects and usually expresses his ideas with little show of reluctance. He has been heralded as a leading intellectual force of his age and just as emphatically condemned as a sensational propagandist of no abiding worth. His plays are usually not well constructed, and his characters inherit the author's fondness for talking too much. Many readers of the plays are uncertain whether Mr. Shaw takes himself seriously, or expects them to take him seriously. He pokes fun at the

doctors, the soldiers, the law-makers, the moralists, and, above all, at those who still entertain any sentimental ideas concerning love, courtship, and marriage. It is a topsy-turvy world in which his characters move and say things that Mr. Shaw feels the world ought to know. All the brilliancy of his wit, however, does not obscure the fact that he is more successful in ridiculing the defects of the social system than in supplying an adequate remedy. Sardonic raillery will not make the world anew. The exalted philosophy taught by Browning or Ruskin is more likely to shape the course of Anglo-Saxon civilization than the clever paradoxes of Mr. Shaw.

Sir James M. Barrie (1860—) was born in Kirriemuir, Scotland, and educated at the University of Edinburgh.

After a brief experience as a journalist at Nottingham he went to London and won his first important literary success with his short stories dealing with Scottish life. *A Window in Thrums* (1889) became very popular, and *The Little Minister* (1891) even more so. *The Little White Bird* (1902) is one of the most charming of his whimsical studies of child-life. As a playwright he first became generally known as the author of *The Professor's Love Story* (1895), which was followed by the great success of his dramatization of *The Little Minister* (1897). These were followed by *Quality Street* (1903), *The Admirable Crichton* (1903), *Peter Pan* (1904), *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916), and *Dear Brutus* (1919.) Most of his plays are thin in dramatic texture, but are written with quaintly humorous dialogue, with an occasional touch of pathos. *Peter Pan*, a delightful fantasy of fairy realms, pirate ships, and the tree-tops, is frequently revived at Christmas time in London and in New York; it promises to become an enduring favorite among Barrie's plays. Grown-ups who have never seen *Peter Pan* should borrow a child, if necessary, and take the youngster to see the wonderful land of make-believe.



Sir James M. Barrie

Granville Barker (1877-) is a Londoner who has been associated with the stage since boyhood. His experience carried him from acting to managing, and from managing to playwrighting. His plays have not been popular, but they are marked by strongly individual characteristics that make them notable in contemporary drama. Such plays as *The*

Marrying of Ann Leete (1902), *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905), *Waste* (1907), *The Madras House* (1910), and several notable adaptations of foreign plays justify the hope that Mr. Barker may yet win a high place among the dramatists.

11. The Celtic Renaissance. During the nineteenth century there developed in Ireland a gradual increase of interest in the Celtic past, but it was not until the organization of the Gaelic League that the movement made much headway. The League brought together those who were chiefly concerned in stimulating interest in a new national literature for Ireland. The leading spirits in the movement were Dr. Douglas Hyde, who was especially active in reviving the old Gaelic language and in making the ancient Celtic literature familiar in translation, and Mr. George W. Russell, who was born at Lurgan, Ireland, and achieved distinction as a painter and journalist. His poetry became widely known under the signature of A. E. Much of his verse is mystical and seeks to interpret the spirit of old Celtic mythology.

Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-) was born in Galway and has engaged in various fields of literary work. She has written essays on numerous topics, collected Celtic folklore, and translated from the Gaelic a wealth of romantic literature as fascinating as *Morte d'Arthur*. She took part in establishing the Irish Literary Theater (1899) and wrote many little Irish comedies and farces that were well received at the Abbey Theater in Dublin and during the American tours of the Irish Players some years ago. Among her more popular plays are *Spreading the News* (1904), *The Gaol Gate* (1906), *Hyacinth Halvey* (1906), *The Rising of the Moon* (1907), and *The Bogie Men* (1913).

William Butler Yeats (1865-) was born in Dublin and became an art student, but turned to literature at twenty-one. He was active in the Irish Literary Theater movement and is looked upon as the most gifted of the Irish poets

and playwrights. His writings include *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889), *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), *Poems* (1895), *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899), *The Shadowy Waters* (1900), and *Deirdre* (1906). There is a subtle flavor of Gaelic mysticism about his work and a fondness for symbolism that suggests his literary kinship with the Belgian writer, M. Maeterlinck.

John M. Synge (1871–1909) was born in Newton Little, near Dublin, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He traveled rather aimlessly about Europe and spent much of his life in Paris. At the prompting of Mr. Yeats he took up the writing of the Celtic plays to which he owes his fame. These are called *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), *The Tinker's Wedding* (1903), *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910). There is some question as to whether these unusual plays are really typical of Celtic tradition, but they are remarkable for their dramatic construction. *Riders to the Sea* is one of the most impressive short tragedies in our literature. The pathetic figure of old Maurya, who has lost her husband and five sons at sea, and whose only hope is her sixth and last son Bartley, is worthy of Greek drama. Tragedy broods over that rude home from the moment the curtain rises; we know that the last, overwhelming blow is to fall upon the afflicted, widowed mother. Many critics regard this play as the finest drama that the Celtic Renaissance has produced.

Lord Dunsany (1878–) was educated at Eton and at Sandhurst. He became a soldier and saw service in the South African War and in the Great War. His plays are all short, but possess unforgettable individuality. *The Glittering Gate*, a dialogue between two dead burglars at the portals of Heaven, was produced in 1909. It was followed by *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior* (1911), *The Gods of the Mountain* (1911), *The Golden Doom* (1912),

A Night at an Inn (1916), *The Queen's Enemies* (1916), and *The Laughter of the Gods* (1917). He also published several notable volumes of tales and legends. His work reveals the strong influence of the old fairy-tales and *The Arabian Nights*. It is marked by mysticism and symbolism. The element of surprise is ever present. One cannot tell what is coming next in a Dunsany play. To this quality Lord Dunsany owes much of his reputation as a dramatist who is doing things never accomplished before on the stage.

12. Recent Essayists. The modern essay has a more important place in literature than might seem possible in view of the commanding importance of fiction. The leading reviews and magazines still devote much of their space to critical prose. There is a direct, influential appeal in a well-written essay that can never be attained in a novel or a short story. It is usually an appeal to the intellect, not to the emotions. There are countless readers who do not care for fiction in any form, but who will respond to the stimulus of a good essay. Many of the authors already mentioned, such as Mr. Masfield, Mr. Zangwill, Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Shaw, and Mr. Yeats, are making important contributions to contemporary critical literature. A few more may be cited whose work lies largely in that field.

Arthur Christopher Benson (1862—) is one of three gifted sons of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. He was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge. For eighteen years he was a teacher at Eton and more recently Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Besides some creditable poetry and several important volumes of biography, he has written *Essays* (1896), *The Schoolmaster* (1902), *The Thread of Gold* (1906), and *From a College Window* (1906).

Arthur Symons (1865—) was born in Wales of Cornish parentage. He has an assured place among contemporary

minor poets, but is more highly esteemed for his critical volumes, which include *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), *Studies in Prose and Verse* (1904), *Studies in Seven Arts* (1906), and *Figures of Several Centuries* (1917).

Edward V. Lucas (1868—) is a charming essayist and compiler of anthologies. His book, *A Wanderer in Holland* (1905), was followed by others devoted to London, Paris, Florence, and Venice. Among his other works are *The Open Road* (1899) and *Old Lamps for New* (1911). He has won the thanks of all lovers of good literature by his fine edition of the works of Lamb.

Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874—) was born in London and educated at St. Paul's School. He is a vivacious novelist and critic who writes much for contemporary periodicals. Mr. Chesterton has not only some admirable satirical stories to his credit, but is also notable as a poet and playwright. He is fond of epigram and paradox. Some of the most fantastic of modern ideas are expressed in his pages. Those who delight in unusual literature should read such books as *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905), *Heretics* (1905), and *Manalive* (1912). He has also wrought some good mystery stories, such as *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911), and *The Wisdom of Father Brown* (1914).

13. Conclusion. Our survey of the living English writers is far from complete, but it is sufficiently extensive to give some idea of the great amount of creditable literature that is now being produced. At the same time it must be remembered that this literature lacks the distinctive, outstanding qualities manifested by the great Victorians at their best. In view of the insistent demand for new work, our writers not only give out hastily prepared manuscripts, but they are usually willing to turn from fiction to essays or from poetry to drama as the demand develops. It is true that Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot wrote

miscellaneous prose and verse as well as novels, but it is obvious that they gave their best talent to fiction. There are no conspicuous names to-day that stand beside such commanding figures as Carlyle and Ruskin in the field of prose, or Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning in the field of poetry. Although we have become accustomed to a respectably high level of mediocre achievement, we are always ready to proclaim the genius of any writers who may arise to make notable contribution to that great heritage of literature which is England's crowning glory.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING AND STUDY

The purpose of these suggestions is to offer real assistance to the teacher, the student, and the general reader. An exhaustive bibliography makes an impressive appearance in print, but is usually more bewildering than enlightening. In the following lists only those titles have been included that are likely to prove useful. The citations have been made as brief as possible in order that the list may be comprehensive in its scope. More detailed information can readily be obtained by consulting the cited works in any field or period of literature. To avoid needless repetition, the general authorities mentioned at the beginning of the list are not quoted again under specific periods or individual authors. Only in a few cases are there definite recommendations for class-room study. As a rule the teacher can determine how much time is available for each author and will regulate the program accordingly. To quote the titles of the shorter poems and prose pieces found in most of the well-edited anthologies would be a waste of time and space. The recommended readings are intended for beginners; more advanced students will have no difficulty in choosing other selections from the works mentioned.

The reader should familiarize himself with the general plan of this entire list before attempting to use any section of it apart from the rest.

ENGLISH HISTORY

A general knowledge of English history is essential to a proper understanding of the literature of the country. Among the best of the shorter histories are those by Andrews, Cheyney, and Wrong. More recent and more extensive is Cross's *History of England and Great Britain*. A well-illustrated work is Gardiner's *Student's History of England*. Green's *Short History of the English People* and Tickner's *Social and Industrial History* stress social developments. Traill's *Social England* (6 vols.) is a mine of interesting material for reference.

TOPOGRAPHY OF ENGLAND

The best general reference works descriptive of the country are the authoritative guide-books published by Murray and Baedeker. Among the entertaining books of travel in various parts of England may be mentioned Addison, *The Spell of England*; Beckitt, *The Spirit of the Downs*; Bond, *The English Cathedrals*; Bradley, *The Romance of Northumberland*; Cram, *The Ruined Abbeys of Great Britain*; Ditchfield, *The Cathedrals of Great Britain*; Emerson, *On English Lagoons*; Francis, London; Frapie, *Castles and Keeps of Scotland*; Gribble, *Romance of the Oxford Colleges*; Harper, *Rural Nooks around London*; Johnson, *Among English Hedgerows*; Johnson, *The Land of Heather*; Kimball, *An English Cathedral Journey*; Lucas, *A Wanderer in London*; Page, *Coasts of Devon*; Raile, *Cambridge and its Story*; Shelley, *Inns and Taverns of Old London*; Singleton, London; Snell, *A Book of Exmoor*; Stawell, *Motor Tours in the West Country*; Treves, *Highways and Byways of Dorset*; Wack, *In Thames Land*; Wade, *Rambles in Somerset*; Whiting, *The Lure of London*.

LITERARY ENGLAND

Still more interesting to the student of literature are the many charming books that tell of literary rambles about the country and of visits to the homes of authors. Notable in this group are the following: Adcock, *Booklovers' London*; Adcock, *Famous Homes and Literary Shrines of London*; Baildon, *Homes and Haunts of Famous Authors*; Bates, *From Gretna Green to Land's End*; Boynton, *London in English Literature*; Bradley, *The English Lakes*; Brassington, *Shakespeare's Homeland*; Cook, *Homes and Haunts of John Ruskin*; Crockett, *The Scott Country*; Dougall, *The Burns Country*; Harper, *The Hardy Country*; Huckel, *Through England with Tennyson*; Hutton, *Literary Landmarks of Edinburgh*; Hutton, *Literary Landmarks of London*; Kitton, *The Dickens Country*; Lang, *Literary London*; Lang, *The Poets' Country*; Masson, *In the Footsteps of the Poets*; Melville, *The Thackeray Country*; Olcott, *The Country of Sir Walter Scott*; Parkinson, *Scenes from the George Eliot Country*; Rawnsley, *Literary Associations of the English Lakes*; Robertson, *Wordsworthshire*; Salmon, *Literary Rambles in the West of England*; Sharp, *Literary*

Geography and Travel Sketches; Sloan, *The Carlyle Country*; Snell, *The Blackmore Country*; Ward, *The Canterbury Pilgrimage*; Windle, *The Wessex of Thomas Hardy*; Wolfe, *A Literary Pilgrimage*.

GENERAL BIOGRAPHY

The standard reference work for biographical accounts of English notables of every sort is the *Dictionary of National Biography* in sixty-three volumes with two supplements of three volumes each. This work, however, includes only deceased writers. For living authors the best general reference is *Who's Who*, which is issued annually. See also *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *New International Cyclopedia* for dead or living writers. The *English Men of Letters* series includes sixty-seven volumes of individual biographies. The *Great Writers* series has twenty-six such sketches, somewhat shorter, but with detailed bibliographies.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The best dictionaries for general reference are the *New Standard Dictionary* and Webster's *New International Dictionary*. The *Century Dictionary* has more detailed definitions and numerous literary quotations. The best reference for the history of English words is the scholarly *New English Dictionary* which is also called the *Oxford Dictionary*. It is the most comprehensive of all dictionaries, but is too inclusive for popular use.

For a summary of the development of the English language and the building up of the vocabulary the following books may be consulted: Bradley, *The Making of English*; Emerson, *History of the English Language*; Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech*; Krapp, *Modern English*; Lounsbury, *History of the English Language*.

HISTORIES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The most recent and in many respects the best of the larger works in this field is the *Cambridge History of English Literature* in fourteen volumes. It is the work of many specialists working in collaboration and has admirable reference lists. Other works of general reference are: Chambers, *Cyclopedia of English Literature* (3 vols.); Moulton, *Library of Literary Criticism*

(8 vols.); Morley, *English Writers* (11 vols.); Hales, *Handbooks of English Literature* (12 vols.); Smeaton, *The Channels of English Literature* (11 vols.). The more readable of the long histories of English literature are those by Garnett and Gosse (4 vols.); Nicoll and Seccombe (3 vols.); and Jusserand (3 vols.). Popular one-volume works have been written by Gosse, Lang, Muir, Ryland, Saintsbury, and Taine.

POETRY AND VERSIFICATION

Alden, *English Verse*; Alden, *Introduction to Poetry*; Court-hope, *History of English Poetry* (6 vols.); Dixon, *English Epic and Heroic Poetry*; Guerber, *The Book of the Epic*; Gummere, *The Beginnings of Poetry*; Gummere, *Handbook of Poetics*; Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*; Ker, *Epic and Romance*; Lowes, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry*; Mackail, *The Springs of Helicon*; Matthews, *A Study of Versification*; Newbolt, *A New Study of Poetry*; Perry, *A Study of Poetry*; Rhys, *English Lyric Poetry*; Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*; Schelling, *The English Lyric*; Stedman, *The Nature of Poetry*.

DRAMA AND DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE

Archer, *Play-making*; Baker, *Dramatic Technique*; Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (2 vols.); Chandler, *Aspects of Modern Drama*; Freytag, *Technique of the Drama*; Hamilton, *The Theory of the Theater*; Hunt, *The Play of To-Day*; Jones, *The Renaissance of the English Drama*; Lewisohn, *The Modern Drama*; Matthews, *The Principles of Play-making*; Matthews, *Study of the Drama*; Price, *The Technique of the Drama*; Schelling, *English Drama*; Thorndike, *Tragedy*.

THE ENGLISH NOVEL

Burton, *Masters of the English Novel*; Chandler, *The Literature of Roguery* (2 vols.); Cross, *The Development of the English Novel*; Dunlop, *History of Fiction*; Follett, *The Modern Novel*; Hamilton, *Materials and Methods of Fiction*; Horne, *Technique of the Novel*; Jusserand, *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*; Lanier, *The English Novel*; Lathrop, *The Art of the Novelist*; Masson, *British Novelists and Their Styles*; Melville, *Victorian Novelists*; Perry, *A Study of Prose Fiction*; Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel*; Raleigh, *The English*

Novel; Saintsbury, *The English Novel*; Simonds, *Introduction to the Study of English Fiction*; Stoddard, *Evolution of the English Novel*; Tuckerman, *History of English Prose Fiction*; Warren, *A History of the Novel Previous to the Seventeenth Century*; Williams, *Two Centuries of the English Novel*.

THE SHORT STORY

Albright, *The Short Story: Its Principles and Structure*; Barrett, *Short Story Writing*; Canby, *The Short Story in English*; Esenwein, *Studying the Short Story*; Esenwein, *Writing the Short Story*; Grabo, *The Art of the Short Story*; Matthews, *The Philosophy of the Short Story*; O'Brien, *Great Modern English Short Stories*; Pitkin, *The Art and the Business of Short Story Writing*.

LITERARY CRITICISM

Arnold, *Essays in Criticism* (2 vols.); Atkins, *English Criticism*; Bennett, *Literary Taste: How to Form It*; Cooper, *Theories of Style*; Gayley and Scott, *Literary Criticism*; Greenslet, *The Essay*; Haney, *Early Reviews of English Poets*; Johnson, *Elements of Literary Criticism*; More, *Shelburne Essays* (9 vols.); Quiller-Couch, *Studies in Literature*; Saintsbury, *Essays in Literature*; Saintsbury, *A History of English Criticism*; Saintsbury, *Loci Critici*; Stephen, *Hours in a Library*; Trent, *Greatness in Literature*; Vaughan, *English Literary Criticism*; Walker, *The English Essay and Essayists*; Winchester, *Principles of Literary Criticism*; Worsfold, *Judgment in Literature*; Worsfold, *Principles of Criticism*; Peacock, *English Essays, Bacon to Stevenson*; Makower and Blackwell, *A Book of English Essays*.

LETTER-WRITING

Coult, *Letters from Many Pens*; Fuess, *Selected English Letters*; Lucas, *The Gentlest Art*; Lockwood and Kelly, *Specimens of Letter-Writing*; Williams, *English Letters and Letter-Writers of the Eighteenth Century*; Rees, *Nineteenth Century Letters*; Duckitt and Wragg, *English Letters*.

SELECTIONS AND ANTHOLOGIES

During recent years many excellent books of selections from English poetry and prose have appeared, making it possible

for the student to become familiar with the best writings of the various authors without the trouble of searching for such masterpieces himself. The most desirable anthologies of poetry are these: Manly, *English Poetry*; Pancoast, *Standard English Poems*; Bronson, *English Poems* (4 vols.); Ward, *English Poets* (5 vols.); Quiller-Couch, *Oxford Book of English Verse*; Palgrave, *Golden Treasury* (2 series); Leonard, *The Pageant of English Poetry*; Stebbing, *Five Centuries of English Verse*; Page, *British Poets of the Nineteenth Century*; Stedman, *Victorian Anthology*; Dixon and Grierson, *The English Parnassus*. The most useful collections of prose pieces are: Manly, *English Prose*; Pancoast, *Standard English Prose*; Craik, *English Prose* (5 vols.); Leonard, *The Pageant of English Prose*; Balston, *English Prose from Mandeville to Ruskin*; Garnett, *English Prose from Elizabeth to Victoria*; Broadus and Gordon, *English Prose from Bacon to Hardy*. Several admirable anthologies contain both poetry and prose: Cunliffe, *Century Readings in English Literature*; Greenlaw and Handford, *The Great Tradition*; Newcomer and Andrews, *Twelve Centuries of English Poetry and Prose*; Pancoast, *English Prose and Verse from Beowulf to Stevenson*. Other useful anthologies of various kinds are: Arber, *British Anthologies* (poetry, 10 vols.); Chambers, *English Pastorals*; Evans, *English Masques*; Hadow, *Oxford Treasury of English Literature* (3 vols.); Henley, *English Lyrics*; Henley and Whibley, *A Book of English Prose*; Herford, *English Tales in Verse*; Lobban, *English Essays*; Quiller-Couch, *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*; Quiller-Couch, *Oxford Book of Ballads*; Schelling, *Elizabethan Lyrics*; Schelling, *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*; Tatlock and Martin, *Representative English Plays*; Weston, *Chief Middle English Poets*; Weston, *Romance, Vision, and Satire*. Besides these varied collections, nearly every important series of annotated classics now has special volumes of ballads, poems, short stories, essays, and letters. A well-chosen assortment of these anthologies should be in every class-room. They provide a maximum of literary material in proportion to their cost and are especially useful because they furnish the text of the best works by minor writers who might otherwise be overlooked.

LITERATURE SERIES

Various publishers now issue uniform and inexpensive series of classic texts, some with editorial annotation, others with

brief introductory notes. The most extensive of these series is Everyman's Library (Dutton), which is gradually approaching the goal of a thousand titles. Other series that enjoy much popularity are Astor Poets (Crowell); Cambridge Edition of English Poets (Houghton, Mifflin); Cambridge English Classics (Putnam); Camelot Series (Scott); Canterbury Poets (Scott); Cassell's National Library (Cassell); Chandos Classics (Warne); English Classics (Macmillan); Globe Edition of English Poets (Macmillan); Golden Treasury Series (Macmillan); Mermaid Series of English Dramatists (Scribner); Morley's Universal Library (Routledge); New Medieval Library (Duffield); Oxford Poets (Clarendon Press); Peoples Library (Cassell); Warwick Library (Blackie); World's Classics (Clarendon Press).

More definitely intended for class-room study are the annotated classics of which there are numerous series in England and in America. Among the best known of these are: Academy Classics (Allyn and Bacon); Arber's English Reprints (Macmillan) Athenaeum Press Series (Ginn); Belles Lettres Series (Heath); Cambridge Literature Series (Sanborn); Canterbury Classics (Rand, McNally); Caxton Classics (Scribner); Clarendon Press Series (Clarendon Press); Eclectic English Classics (American Book); English Readings (Holt); Gateway Series (American Book); Heath's English Classics (Heath); King's Classics (Luce); Lake English Classics (Scott, Foresman); Lakeside Classics (Ainsworth); Longman's English Classics (Longman); Macmillan Pocket Classics (Macmillan); Maynard's English Classics (Merrill); Merrill's English Texts (Merrill); Pitt Press Series (Cambridge University); Riverside Literature Series (Houghton, Mifflin); Rolfe's Shakespeare (American Book); Scribner's English Classics (Scribner); Silver Series (Silver, Burdett); Standard English Classics (Ginn); Students' Series of English Classics (Sibley); Temple Classics (Dutton); Temple Dramatists (Dutton); Twentieth Century Classics (Appleton).

Every teacher should have catalogues of the more important series at hand and should note the new titles that are constantly being added to most of the lists.

PERIODS OF LITERATURE

THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

General: Brooke, *History of Early English Literature*; Lewis, *Beginnings of English Literature*; Snell, *Age of Alfred*; Ten Brink, *Early English Literature* (3 vols.). See also Ker, *The Dark Ages*; Marks, *Early English Hero-Tales*; Gummere, *The Oldest English Epic*. The best anthologies for the period are Pancoast and Spaeth, *Early English Poems*; Cook and Tinker, *Selected Translations from Old English Prose*; Cook and Tinker, *Selected Translations from Old English Verse*; Faust and Thompson, *Old English Poems*.

Beowulf. Read Child's prose translation (Riverside). Other prose translations are by Arnold and Earle; verse translations by Lumsden, Garnett, Morris, Hall.

Minor Poetry. Read the selections in the anthologies. Caedmon and Cynewulf have been translated by Kennedy. *The Exeter Book* has been translated by Gollancz. See also Cook's translation of *Judith*, and Tennyson's *Battle of Brunanburh*.

Old English Prose. Read the extracts in the anthologies. Bede's *History* and *The Chronicle* may be had in translation in Everyman's Library. For most purposes the anthology extracts from Bede, Alfred, Aelfric, and *The Chronicle* are adequate.

THE ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD

General: Baldwin, *An Introduction to English Medieval Literature*; Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*. See also Ker, *Epic and Romance*; Lawrence, *The Medieval Story*; Maynadier, *Arthur in the English Poets*; Nutt, *The Legends of the Holy Grail*; Saintsbury, *The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory*; Trevelyan, *The Land of Arthur*.

Prose. Anthology extracts may be supplemented by the translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth (Everyman's Library) and the modernized version of *Ancren Riwe* called *The Nun's Rule* by Morton.

Romances. The best modern versions are in Weston, *Chief Middle English Poets*, and in Weston, *Romance, Vision, and Satire*. See also Weston's *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Extracts may be found in Bronson, *English Poems*. Most of the important romances are summarized in Morley, *English Writers*.

Minor Poetry. There is little occasion for going beyond the poems included in the anthologies. *The Pearl* may be read complete in translations by Weston, Mead, Mitchell, Jewell, Osgood, and Gollancz.

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

General: Browne, *Chaucer's England*; Coulton, *Chaucer and his England*; Snell, *The Age of Chaucer*. See also Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century*; Snell, *The Fourteenth Century*. Good selections are found in Neilson and Webster, *Chief British Poets of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*.

Mandeville. Complete modernized version in English Classics Series; an abbreviated version in Cassell's National Library. The anthology extracts do not represent this work adequately.

Wycliffe. The selected English works have been edited by Arnold. There are also extracts in the English Classics Series and in the anthologies.

Piers Plowman. The standard edition is by Skeat. A modern version in Everyman's Library is in verse; there is also a prose translation by Warren.

Gower. The best edition is by G. C. Macaulay, who has also edited selections from *Confessio Amantis*. The anthology extracts are generally adequate.

Chaucer. There are excellent one-volume editions by Skeat and by Pollard. Modernized versions have been made with varying success by Mackaye, *Prose Version of Chaucer*; Tappan, *Stories from Chaucer*; Tatlock and Mackaye, *The Modern Reader's Chaucer*. See also Kittredge, *Chaucer and his Poetry*; Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer*; Thompson, *Tales of the Canterbury Pilgrims*; Pollard, *Chaucer Primer*; Legouis, *Chaucer*; Ward, *Chaucer*. *The Prologue*, *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, and *The Squire's Tale* should be read complete. *The Knight's Tale* may be read later in Dryden's version. Early poems and minor poems are well represented in the anthologies.

THE RENAISSANCE

General: Saintsbury, *The Earlier Renaissance*; Smith, *The Transition Period*; Snell, *The Age of Transition*. See also Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*; Schofield, *Chivalry in English Literature*.

Minor Poets. Such poets as Lydgate, Hoccleve, and the Scottish writers are well represented in the anthologies.

Popular Ballads. The standard collection is by Child (5 vols.). More convenient editions have been prepared by Bates, *A Ballad Book*; Gummere, *Old English Ballads*; Johnson, *Popular British Ballads* (4 vols.); Sargent and Kittredge, *English and Scotch Popular Ballads*; Quiller-Couch, *Oxford Book of Ballads*; and numerous inexpensive collections in the annotated classics series. See Gummere's *The Popular Ballad*. The anthology extracts should be supplemented by readings from the annotated editions.

Morte d'Arthur. Standard text is the Globe edition. It should be read in such editions as those prepared by Mead, Child, Swiggett, and Wragg and Martin. The anthologies cannot do justice to this work. See also Pyle, *Stories of King Arthur*; Lanier, *The Boy's King Arthur*; Lang, *Tales of the Round Table*. No information concerning Malory is available.

More. English versions of *Utopia* may be found in Camelot, Temple, Cassell's National Library, Everyman's Library, and other series. The anthologies have extracts that are altogether unsatisfactory. Every student should be familiar with this important book.

Ascham. *The Scholemaster* has been edited by Wright and by Arber. For other extracts the anthologies will suffice.

Wyatt and Surrey. *Tottel's Miscellany* was edited by Arber, but the anthologies have adequate specimens of these poets.

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

General: Saintsbury, *History of Elizabethan Literature*; Schelling, *English Literature in the Lifetime of Shakespeare*; Seacombe and Allen, *The Age of Shakespeare*. See also Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*; Creighton, *The Age of Elizabeth*; Hannay, *The Later Renaissance*; *Shakespeare's England* (2 vols., Oxford); Stephenson, *Shakespeare's London*; Stephenson, *The Elizabethan People*; Thornbury, *Shakespeare's England*.

Elizabethan Prose. The minor prose writers, like Lyly, Lodge, Greene, and others, are well represented in the anthologies.

Sidney. There are editions of *Arcadia* by Sommer and by Baker. *The Defense of Poesie* has been edited by Cook. Feuillet-rat has prepared a scholarly edition of Sidney's *Works*. There are biographies by Symonds, Addleshaw, and Wallace. In most cases anthology extracts are satisfactory.

Raleigh. The selections in Arber's Reprints may be used to supplement the extracts given in the anthologies, which are rather brief. There are entertaining biographies by Edwards, Gosse, and Stebbing.

Bacon. There are innumerable editions of the *Essays* in annotated form. These are more desirable than unedited texts because of Bacon's learned references. At least eight or ten of the best *Essays* should be read. The anthologies cannot do justice to Bacon, as a rule, but a few have as many *Essays* as have been indicated. There are biographies by Church and Nichols, and a valuable critical essay by Macaulay.

Minor Poetry. The selections in Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics* and in Carpenter's *English Lyric Poetry* may be used in addition to the anthologies. See also Arber's *Spenser Anthology* and *Shakespeare Anthology*.

Spenser. The Globe and Cambridge Editions are complete. *The Faerie Queene* may be read in Everyman's Library. After reading the first canto of Book I the anthologies may be followed for other extracts. Annotated editions are desirable in the case of Spenser. See Church, *Life of Spenser* and Carpenter, *Outline Guide to the Study of Spenser*.

The Drama. The most comprehensive histories are Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama* (2 vols.); Ward, *English Dramatic Literature* (3 vols.); Brooke, *The Tudor Drama*. For the development of the theater, see Albright, *The Shakespearian Stage*; Lawrence, *The Elizabethan Playhouse*; Thorndike, *Shakespeare's Theater*. For the religious drama, see Bates, *Early Religious Drama*, and Gayley, *Plays of our Forefathers*. *Everyman* may be read in various annotated editions and in Everyman's Library. For selections from other religious plays, the last-mentioned volume may be supplemented by Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, or Manly, *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama* (3 vols.). Manly's collection is also excellent for the predecessors of Shakespeare. These and other dramatists of the period may be read in the Temple Dramatists, the Belles Lettres Series,

the Mermaid Series, and in Everyman's Library. The best anthologies of plays of the period are Neilson, *Chief Elizabethan Dramatists*; Williams, *Specimens of Elizabethan Drama*, and Thayer, *Best Elizabethan Plays*. See also Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, and Oxford *Treasury of English Literature*.

Shakespeare. The most desirable plays for class-reading are *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV (Part I)*, *Henry V*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*. These are available in numerous excellent editions for study. The Globe Shakespeare and the Oxford Shakespeare are excellent for general reference as complete one-volume editions. The scholarly Furness Variorum edition is a monument of erudition. The *Concordance* by Bartlett and the *Grammar* by Abbott are useful. The best of the more recent biographies are those by Lee, Smeaton, and Rolfe. Valuable handbooks of Shakespeare have been prepared by Luce, McCracken, and Neilson and Thorndike. See also Baker, *Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*; Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*; Brandes, *William Shakespeare*; Brasington, *Shakespeare's Homeland*; Coleridge, *Lectures on Shakespeare*; Corson, *Introduction to Shakespeare*; Dowden, *Introduction to Shakespeare*; Dowden, *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*; Lounsbury, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*; Matthews, *Shakespeare as a Playwright*; Moulton, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*; Rolfe, *Shakespeare the Boy*; Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*; Wendell, *William Shakespeare*. This array of valuable books must not obscure the fact that it is more important to read Shakespeare than to read about him.

THE PURITAN AGE

General: Masterman, *The Age of Milton*; Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century*. See also Dowden, *Puritan and Anglican*; Gosse, *Jacobean Poets*; Grierson, *The First Half of the Seventeenth Century*.

Puritan Prose. Fairly good extracts from Taylor, Walton, Browne, and Fuller may be found in the anthologies. *Holy Living*, *Holy Dying*, *The Compleat Angler*, and *Religio Medici* may be had in Cassell's National Library. *The Compleat Angler* is available in numerous other editions. See also Penniman, *A Book About the English Bible*.

Bunyan. Part I of *Pilgrim's Progress* should be read entire. There are various annotated editions, but Bunyan may be read profitably without notes. *Life*, Froude, Brown, Venables. *Criticism*, Macaulay, Tulloch, Woodberry.

Puritan Poetry. Adequate selections from Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and the Caroline Poets will be found in the anthologies. See also Schelling, *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*; Quiller-Couch, *Studies in Literature*, and Holliday, *Cavalier Poets*.

Milton. Read *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, and *Comus*; also extracts from Book I of *Paradise Lost*. The anthologies will serve for the sonnets and for prose selections. Complete poetical works are available in the Globe and Cambridge Editions. *Life*, Pattison, Garnett,* Raleigh, Trent. *Criticism*, Corson, Arnold, Macaulay, Lowell, Dowden.

THE RESTORATION

General: Elton, *The Augustan Ages*; Garnett, *The Age of Dryden*; Gosse, *From Shakespeare to Pope*. See also Chase, *The English Heroic Play*; Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration*.

Poetry. Good selections from Waller, Butler and other Restoration Poets are given in most of the anthologies.

The Diarists. The standard edition of Pepys is by Wheatley, who also wrote the best biography of Pepys. There are also convenient editions in Everyman's Library and Cassell's National Library. The selections in the anthologies are not adequate, and should be supplemented by reading from a larger text. Evelyn is less important.

The Drama. These plays are not desirable for class-room study, but are well represented by the collection in Everyman's Library. More complete texts are available in the Mermaid Dramatists.

Dryden. Read *Palamon and Arcite*, besides the anthology extracts. The complete poetical works are in the Globe Edition and Cambridge Edition. The best edition of the essays is by Ker. *Life*, Saintsbury. *Criticism*, Macaulay, Lowell, Collins, Masson, Hazlitt.

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

General: Dennis, *The Age of Pope*; Gosse, *Eighteenth Century Literature*; Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*. See also Millar, *The Mid-Eighteenth Century*; Stephen, *English Literature in the Eighteenth Century*; Thackeray, *English Humorists*; Daw-

son, *Makers of Modern Prose*; Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*; Saintsbury, *The Peace of the Augustans*.

Addison and Steele. Read the *De Coverley Papers* and other extracts from *The Spectator*. These are available in many annotated editions. The anthologies do not usually print enough of these papers, but give adequate specimens of Addison's poetry. See biographies (of Addison) by Courthope; (of Steele) by Dobson, and by Aitken. *Criticism*, Macaulay, Gosse, Dobson, Thackeray.

Swift. Read selections from the first and second parts of *Gulliver's Travels*, and follow the anthologies for extracts from the minor works. *Life*, Stephen, Collins, Craik, Forster. *Criticism*, Ainger, Birrell, Dobson, Masson, Thackeray.

Pope. Read *The Rape of the Lock*, extracts from *Essay on Criticism* and the *Iliad*. Use the anthologies for other selections. Complete poetical works in Globe and Cambridge Editions. Numerous annotated texts available. *Life*, Paston, Stephen, Courthope, Symonds. *Criticism*, Lowell, Stephen, DeQuincey.

The Rise of the Novel. See the titles quoted under "The English Novel" on pages 416-417.

DeFoe. Every student should be familiar with *Robinson Crusoe*. Selections from *The Journal of the Plague* and the anthology extracts may be read in class. *Life*, Minto, Wright, Lee, Whitten. *Criticism*, Stephen, Trent.

The Novelists. The works of the novelists are not adapted for class-room reading, apart from the few extracts in the anthologies. For further study of these writers the following references are cited: **Richardson:** *Life*, Dobson, Thomson; *Criticism*, Dobson, Stephen, Traill. **Fielding:** *Life*, Dobson, Godden, Lawrence; *Criticism*, Stephen, Lowell, Thackeray. **Smollett:** *Life*, Hannay, Smeaton, Chambers; *Criticism*, Thackeray, Henley, Dobson. **Sterne:** *Life*, Cross, Melville, Fitzgerald, Traill; *Criticism*, Thackeray, Bagehot.

Johnson. The extracts in the anthologies are sufficient for most purposes. Excellent abridged versions of Boswell's *Johnson* are now obtainable in annotated editions. This work is more significant than Johnson's own writings. *Life*, Stephen, Grant. *Criticism*, Macaulay, Stephen, Birrell, Raleigh.

Goldsmith. Read *The Deserted Village* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Poetical works may be had in Globe Edition and Astor Poets. *Life*, Irving, Dobson, Black, Moore. *Criticism*, Macaulay, Thackeray, DeQuincey, Dobson.

Burke. Read *Conciliation with America* or *American Taxation*, also extracts from *Letter to a Noble Lord*. Burke should be read in an annotated edition, in view of the importance of his prose. Few writers better repay close study of their texts. Many excellent editions of the more important speeches are available. *Life*, Morley, Prior. *Criticism*, Birrell, Dowden, MacCunn.

Gibbon. Anthologies have extracts that are usually sufficient. The best edition of the works is by Bury. *Life*, Morison. *Criticism*, Birrell, Stephen, Bagehot, Harrison.

Sheridan. *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal* are both included in several annotated series. *Life* and *Criticism*, Rae, Oliphant, Sanders.

EARLY ROMANTICISM

General: Beers, *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*; Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*; Minto, *Literature of the Georgian Era*; Vaughn, *The Romantic Revolt*.

Early Poets. Extracts from Thomson, Young, and Collins are to be found in the usual anthologies and are fairly representative. It will not be necessary to consult larger collections.

Ossian. Read the extracts in the anthologies. See Nutt's *Ossian and Ossianic Literature*.

Percy. Available in Astor Poets and other inexpensive editions. Less desirable for class-study than later editions of ballads.

Romantic Novel. Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* may be had in Cassell's National Library. *Criticism*, Stephen, Greenwood.

Chatterton. The anthology extracts are sufficient. *Life*, Russell, Wilson, Masson.

Gray. The *Elegy* and the best of the other poems are printed in most of the anthologies. The best edition of the works is by Gosse. *Life*, Gosse. *Criticism*, Lowell, Arnold, Stephen, Dobson.

Cowper. *John Gilpin's Ride* should be read in addition to the usual anthology extracts. Complete poetical works in the Globe Edition. *Life*, Smith, Wright, Southey. *Criticism*, Stephen, Bagehot, Brooke, Dobson, Woodberry, More.

Crabbe. Several poems are accessible in Cassell's National Library, but the anthology extracts are adequate. *Life*, Kebbel, Ainger, Huchon. *Criticism*, Woodberry, Stephen, Saintsbury, Hazlitt.

Blake. The best poems are included in the anthologies. *Life*, Chesterton, Gilchrist, Selincourt, Story, Symons. *Criticism*, Swinburne, Cary, More, Benson.

Burns. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and other important poems should be read in annotated editions, which are more satisfactory than the anthologies, especially on account of the use of dialect in various poems. Complete poetical works are available in the Globe and Cambridge Editions. *Life*, Shairp, Henley, Blackie, Setoun, Henderson. *Criticism*, Carlyle, Stevenson, Brooke, Forster, Neilson.

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

General: Beers, *English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*; Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*; Omond, *The Romantic Triumph*; Elton, *A Survey of English Literature from 1780 to 1830*. See also Dowden, *The French Revolution and English Literature*; Symons, *The Romantic Movement in English Literature*; Shairp, *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*; Palgrave, *Landscape in Poetry*; Hancock, *The French Revolution and English Poets*.

Wordsworth. More of Wordsworth should be read than is found in most of the anthologies. The annotated texts are best. For the complete text see the Globe and Cambridge Editions. *Life*, Harper, Myers, Raleigh, Knight, Legouis, Rannie. *Criticism*, Stephen, Masson, Bradley, Pater, Lowell, Hutton, Arnold, Church, Bagehot, Hazlitt.

Coleridge. Read *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, *Kubla Khan*, and other anthology selections. Complete poetical works in Globe Edition. *Life*, Campbell, Traill, Caine, Garnett. *Criticism*, Dowden, Stephen, Woodberry, Swinburne, DeQuincey, Brooke, Shairp, Pater, Saintsbury.

Southey. Anthology extracts will suffice for the poems. Read also *Life of Nelson*, which is available in annotated editions. *Life*, Dowden. *Criticism*, Stephen, Hazlitt, Saintsbury.

Scott. Read *The Lady of the Lake* or *Marmion*, as well as shorter pieces in the anthologies. The best novels for study are *Quentin Durward*, *Kenilworth*, *Guy Mannering*, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, *Ivanhoe*. *Life*, Hutton, Lang, Lockhart, Yonge, Saintsbury. *Criticism*, Bagehot, Stephen, Brooke, Swinburne, Carlyle, Stevenson, Shairp, Young.

Austen. Read *Pride and Prejudice*. Only a few of the novels

are available in annotated form. *Life*, G. Smith, Austen-Leigh, Mitton, Cornish, Adams, Hill. *Criticism*, Pollock, Pellew, Bonnell, Howells, Helm, Fitzgerald.

Lamb. Annotated editions of the *Essays of Elia* should be used for study. The anthology extracts are very inadequate. At least six of the more important essays mentioned in the text should be read. *Life*, Lucas, Ainger. *Criticism*, More, Woodberry, Pater, Birrell, DeQuincey, Harrison.

Landor. The anthology selections are sufficient. His poetry should not be overlooked. *Life*, Colvin, Forster. *Criticism*, Woodberry, De Quincey, Dowden, Saintsbury, Swinburne.

Hazlitt. The extracts in the anthologies are not satisfactory, but unfortunately few annotated editions are available. *Life*, Birrell, W. C. Hazlitt. *Criticism*, More, Saintsbury, Stephen.

Hunt. Read both poetry and prose in the anthologies. *Life*, Monkhouse. *Criticism*, Macaulay, Saintsbury, Hazlitt.

DeQuincey. *The English Mail Coach* and similar essays may be obtained in annotated editions. Anthology extracts are usually too short. *Life*, Masson, Salt, Japp, Hogg. *Criticism*, Stephen, Saintsbury, Masson.

The Reviewers. There are several editions of selected essays by Jeffrey and other critics. See Haney, *Early Reviews of English Poets*, and Stevenson, *Early Reviews*.

Byron. Read *The Prisoner of Chillon* and selections, especially from Canto III, of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The anthologies give a fairly representative collection of the shorter poems. For complete poetical works see Globe, Cambridge, and Oxford Editions. *Life*, Nichol, Noel. *Criticism*, Woodberry, Arnold, Macaulay, Morley, Swinburne, Hazlitt.

Shelley. *Adonais* and the important shorter poems are printed in nearly all anthologies. Complete poetical works in Globe, Cambridge, and Astor Editions. *Life*, Dowden, Symonds, Sharp, Rossetti. *Criticism*, Bradley, Masson, Woodberry, Arnold, Gosse, Brooke, Dowden, Bagehot, Hutton.

Keats. *The Eve of St. Agnes* should be read in addition to the short pieces in the anthologies. Complete poetical works in Globe, Cambridge, and Astor Editions. *Life*, Colvin, Rossetti, Hancock. *Criticism*, Bradley, Masson, Arnold, Lowell, Brooke, Hudson, Swinburne.

Minor Poets. Adequate selections from Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and Hood will be found in most of the anthologies. Their poems are not available in the familiar annotated classics.

THE VICTORIAN AGE

General: Harrison, *Early Victorian Literature*; Oliphant, *The Victorian Age of English Literature*; Saintsbury, *The Nineteenth Century Literature*; Hudson, *Short History of English Literature in the Nineteenth Century*; Saintsbury, *The Later Nineteenth Century*; Walker, *The Age of Tennyson*; Walker, *Literature of the Victorian Era*. See also Brownell, *Victorian Prose Masters*; Payne, *The Greater English Poets of the Nineteenth Century*; Stedman, *Victorian Poets*; Walker, *The Greater Victorian Poets*; Sharp, *Victorian Poets*; Magnus, *English Literature in the Nineteenth Century*.

Macaulay. The best essays for study are those on Johnson, Addison, Hastings, Bacon, Clive, and Milton. Extracts from the *History of England* and the poems will be found in most anthologies. At least three of the important essays should be carefully studied. *Life*, Trevelyan, Morison. *Criticism*, Sedgwick, Stephen, Bagehot, Minto, Arnold.

Carlyle. The *Essay on Burns* should be read entire; anthology extracts may be used for other selections. *Life*, Garnett, Warner, Froude, Matz, Arnold. *Criticism*, Lowell, Hutton, Brownell, Minto, Craig, Masson, Harrison, Lilly.

Tennyson. The best of the long poems for study are *Lancelot and Elaine*, *The Passing of Arthur*, *Enoch Arden*, *The Princess*, and portions of *In Memoriam*. The shorter poems are well represented in most anthologies. Complete works in Globe and Cambridge Editions. *Life*, Hallam Lord Tennyson, Lounsbury, Lyall, Benson. *Handbooks*, Luce, Tainsh, Masterman, Lockyer, Van Dyke, Maccallum, Brooke. *Criticism*, Harrison, Hutton, Gates, Dowden, Gordon, Bagehot, Forster.

Browning. Read *Andrea del Sarto*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and the short poems in the annotated editions. The anthologies in many cases do not give sufficient material. Complete works in the Globe and Cambridge Editions. *Life*, Sharp, Orr, Griffin and Minchin, Chesterton, Gosse. *Handbooks*, Orr, Symons, Berdoo, Corson, Alexander, Cooke. *Criticism*, Brooke, Dowden, Morley, Symons, Forster, Birrell.

Mrs. Browning. Read *The Cry of the Children* and selected *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Complete works in the Globe and Cambridge Editions. *Life*, Ingram. *Criticism*, Whiting, Stedman, Benson, G. B. Smith.

Arnold. Read *Sohrab and Rustum*, also the shorter pieces

in the anthologies. Complete poems in Globe Edition. *Life*, Paul, Saintsbury, Dawson, Russell. *Criticism*, Robertson, Harrison, Woodberry, Gates, Brooke, Hutton.

Rossetti. Read *The Blessed Damsel*, *Sister Helen*, *The King's Tragedy*, and selected sonnets. The anthologies are fairly good. *Life*, W. M. Rossetti, Benson, Marillier, Knight, Sharp, Cary. *Criticism*, W. M. Rossetti, Brooke, Myers, Swinburne, Pater, Tirebuck.

Morris. The anthology extracts from *The Earthly Paradise* and other poems are adequate. *Life*, Mackail, Noyes, Cary, Drinkwater. *Criticism*, Brooke, Swinburne, Dawson, More, Symons, Brock.

Swinburne. The anthology extracts are in most cases sufficient. *Life*, Gosse, Woodberry, Wratislaw. *Criticism*, Mackail, Woodberry, Thomas, Lowell, Forman.

Other Poets. Selected poems from Fitzgerald, Clough, Dobson, Lang, Henley, Davidson, and Thompson will be found in the better anthologies, especially those of recent years.

The Novel. See the general references cited on pages 416-417.

Dickens. *A Christmas Carol* is the best of the short stories; *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *Pickwick Papers* are the best of the longer works. See Philip, *A Dickens Dictionary*. *Life*, Ward, Elison, Kitton, Forster, Marzials. *Criticism*, Gissing, Chesterton, Harrison, Bagehot, Lilly, Barlow.

Thackeray. Selections from *The Roundabout Papers* or *The English Humorists* may be read in conjunction with *Vanity Fair* and *Henry Esmond*. See Mudge and Sears, *A Thackeray Dictionary*. *Life*, Trollope, Melville, Merivale and Marzials, Whibley. *Criticism*, Sedgwick, Lilly, Brownell, Harrison, Scudder.

Eliot. Read *Silas Marner*, *Adam Bede*, or *Romola*. The poems are fairly well represented in the anthologies. *Life*, Cross, Stephen, Cooke, Blind, O. Browning. *Criticism*, Brownell, James, Olcott, Cooke, Jacobs, Dowden, Harrison.

Meredith. *The Egoist* and *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* afford the best optional reading. *Life*, Hammerton, Henderson. *Criticism*, Brownell, Bailey, Crees, Henley, Beach, Trevelyan, Lynch, Curle, Sherman, Jerrold.

Hardy. Read *Far from the Madding Crowd* or *The Return of the Native*. See Saxelby, *A Thomas Hardy Dictionary*. *Life*, Child. *Criticism*, Phelps, Johnson, Abercrombie, Macdonnell.

Stevenson. Read *The Sire de Malétrait's Door* or any other short stories included in the anthologies and annotated editions. *Treasure Island* and *An Inland Voyage* may represent the longer works. The essays and poems are available in the anthologies. *Life*, Balfour, Raleigh, Hamilton, Japp. *Criticism*, James, Swinnerton, Phelps, Baildon, Brown, Chapman, Rice.

Other Novelists. Such writers as Lytton, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Reade, Trollope, the Brontës, Kingsley, Collins, Blackmore, and Gissing are best represented by the novels commended in the text. With few exceptions their works are not available in annotated editions.

Ruskin. Read *Sesame and Lilies*. Other works are fairly well represented in anthologies. *Life*, Cook, Earland, Collingwood, Wingate, Harrison, Benson. *Criticism*, W. M. Rossetti, Brownell, Mather, Mrs. Meynell, Robertson, Scudder, Hobson, Waldstein.

Newman. Read *Idea of a University* and the anthology selections. *Life*, Hutton, Ward, Barry, Jennings. *Criticism*, Church, Lilly, Gates, Jacobs.

Scientific Writers. Several of Huxley's *Essays* are available in annotated editions, but apart from these the anthologies give a few specimens from such writers as Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer.

Other Essayists. Pater, Lang, and Stephen are represented in some anthologies, but are best read in the works cited in the text.

CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

General: Cunliffe, *English Literature during the Last Half Century*; Kennedy, *English Literature (1880-1913)*; Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature*; Mais, *From Shakespeare to O. Henry*; Williams, *Modern English Writers*; Lynd, *Old and New Masters*; Freeman, *The Moderns*; Sturgeon, *Studies of Contemporary Poets*; Phelps, *The Advance of Poetry in the Twentieth Century*; Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation*; Lewisohn, *The Modern Drama*; Howe, *Dramatic Portraits*; Dukes, *Modern Dramatists*; Hale, *Dramatists of To-Day*; Borsa, *The English Stage of To-Day*; Phelps, *The Twentieth Century Theatre*; Follett, *Some Modern Novelists*; Phelps, *Essays on Modern Novelists*.

Kipling. A few of the best short stories are included in the annotated series and several of the popular poems are in the

anthologies, but these should be supplemented by readings from the larger collections. *Captains Courageous* and both *Jungle Books* should also be read. See Knowles, *A Kipling Primer* and Young, *A Kipling Dictionary*. Life, Palmer. *Criticism*, Phelps, LeGallienne, Falls, Monkhood, Hopkins, Cooper.

Phillips. Read *Marpessa*, *Paolo and Francesca*, or *Ulysses*. The anthology selections are inadequate. *Criticism*, Hale, Archer.

Masefield. Read extracts from the longer narrative poems and such shorter poems as are found in the more recent anthologies.

Noyes. Read extracts from *Drake*, *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, and the more familiar shorter poems found in the latest anthologies.

Recent Fiction. The novels of DeMorgan, Mrs. Ward, Conrad, Doyle, Hewlett, Phillpotts, Locke, Hichens, Zangwill, Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy may be chosen from the titles commended in the text.

Recent Drama. Plays by Pinero, Jones, Wilde, Shaw, Barrie, and Barker may readily be selected from those cited in the text.

Celtic Renaissance. See Hyde, *A Literary History of Ireland*; Boyd, *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*; Morris, *Celtic Dawn*; Weygandt, *Irish Plays and Playwrights*. Readings from Lady Gregory, Yeats, Synge, and Lord Dunsany are indicated in the text.

Recent Essayists. Selections from Benson, Symons, Lucas, and Chesterton are not generally available in the anthologies. They should be selected from the books mentioned in the text.

Most of all the works cited as general references on contemporary writers will afford further suggestions for more intensive study of the current literature of to-day. Recent issues of *The Cumulative Book Index* should be consulted for new books in all fields of writing.

SUGGESTED READING IN FICTION, POETRY,
AND DRAMA ILLUSTRATING THE VARIOUS
PERIODS OF ENGLISH HISTORY

1. **Celtic and Roman Britain.** Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill*; Shakespeare, *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*; Cutts, *The Villa of Claudius*; Church, *The Count of the Saxon Shore*.

2. **The Anglo-Saxon Period.** Forrest, *Builders of the Waste*; Ellis, *The Soul of a Serf*; Davidson, *Edward the Exile*; Senior, *The Clutch of Circumstance*; Tennyson, *Harold*; Bulwer-Lytton, *Harold*.

3. **The Anglo-Norman Period.** Kingsley, *Hereward the Wake*; Swan, *The Sword and the Cowl*; Macfarlane, *The Camp of Refuge*; Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies*; Scott, *The Betrothed*; Tennyson, *Becket*; Hewlett, *Richard Yea and Nay*; Scott, *Ivanhoe*, *The Talisman*; Crawford, *Via Crucis*; Shakespeare, *King John*; Marlowe, *Edward II*; Porter, *Scottish Chiefs*; Doyle, *Sir Nigel*.

4. **The Fourteenth Century and the Renaissance.** Doyle, *The White Company*; Shakespeare, *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*; Converse, *Long Will*, *A Romance*; Yonge, *The Lances of Lynwood*; Bulwer-Lytton, *The Last of the Barons*; Forster, *In Steel and Leather*; Stevenson, *The Black Arrow*; Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*; Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, *Marmion*; Major, *When Knighthood was in Flower*; Yonge, *The Armourer's Apprentice*.

5. **The Elizabethan Age.** Twain, *Prince and Pauper*; Ainsworth, *The Tower of London*; Tennyson, *Queen Mary*; Peabody, *Marlowe*; Scott, *Kenilworth*; Kingsley, *Westward Ho*; Hewlett, *The Queen's Quair*; Scott, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*; Parker, *A Ladder of Swords*; Bennett, *Master Skylark*; Noyes, *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*; Johnston, *Sir Mortimer*.

6. **The Seventeenth Century.** Manning, *The Masque at Ludlow*; Church, *With the King at Oxford*; Shorthouse, *John Inglesant*; Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Woodstock*, *Peveril of the Peak*; Black, *Judith Shakespeare*; Quiller-Couch, *The Splendid Spur*; Blackmore, *Lorna Doone*; Doyle, *Micah*

Clarke; Ainsworth, *Old St. Paul's*; Hill, *Under Three Kings*; Weyman, *Shrewsbury*.

7. **The Eighteenth Century.** Blake, *A Lady's Honor*; DeFoe, *Robinson Crusoe*; Manning, *Old Chelsea Bun-House*; Thackeray, *Barry Lyndon*, *Henry Esmond*; Bulwer-Lytton, *Devereux*; Scott, *Rob Roy*, *Waverley*, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*; Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, *Catriona*, *The Master of Ballantrae*; Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*; Castle, *The Bath Comedy*; Thackeray, *The Virginians*; Craik, *John Halifax, Gentleman*; Tarkington, *Monsieur Beaucaire*; Churchill, *Richard Carvel*; Scott, *Guy Mannering*, *Redgauntlet*; Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities*; Moore, *The Jessamy Bride*.

8. **The Nineteenth Century.** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; Doyle, *Rodney Stone*; Scott, *The Antiquary*; Hardy, *The Trumpet Major*; Eliot, *Adam Bede*; Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*; Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*; Gaskell, *Cranford*; Lever, *Charles O'Malley*; Dickens, *Bleak House*; Trollope, *Barchester Towers*; Kingsley, *Alton Locke*; Besant, *Children of Gibeon*; Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*; DeMorgan, *Joseph Vance*; Bennett, *Old Wives' Tale*; Ward, *Marcella*, *The Marriage of William Ashe*.

9. **The Twentieth Century.** Sinclair, *The Three Sisters*; Swinnerton, *Nocturne*; Kaye-Smith, *Sussex Gorse*; Snaith, *The Undeclared*; Galsworthy, *Beyond*; Phillpotts, *Green Alleys*; Wells, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*; Locke, *The Red Planet*; Walpole, *Fortitude*; Ward, *Missing*; Wells, *Joan and Peter*.

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